ROCK CANDY

FOR THOSE WHO WERE RAISED ON ROCK

October - November 2020

TESLA ★ FISH ★ LITTLE CAESAR ★ GENTLE GIANT ★ DARE ★ GIANT ★ BADLANDS

MARTIN BIRCH ★ THE ALLMAN BETTS BAND ★ SKID ROW ★ KINGDOM COME ★ BUMBLEFOOT ★ BLUE MURDER

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SCORPIONS

'CRAZY WORLD' 30TH ANNIVERSARY
KLAUS, RUDOLF, AND MATTHIAS ON THE MAKING OF A CLASSIC

GUNS N' ROSES + METALLICA TOUR 1992

THEY SAID IT WOULD NEVER HAPPEN

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ROCK CANDY

WELCOME

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED to the memory of Pete Way and all the fabulous music he helped create, because we're still mourning the loss of the former UFO bassist. Although not entirely unexpected, all the same Pete's passing shocked and saddened many of us who knew him as one of the nicest people in the music business. Despite Pete not having been a member of UFO since 2008, plenty of fans were secretly hoping that there might be one last reunion, which would surely have cemented the band's place in rock history. Seeing Way and vocalist Phil Mogg on a stage together again, playing those classic rock songs one last time, would have provided a suitable coda to a truly magnificent career. As we all know Pete was no choirboy, and maybe his weaknesses prevented him from becoming an even greater musical force. But he still leaves behind a marvellous body of work that assures his place as a key figure in the history of rock. Issue 20 of *Rock Candy Mag* contained a superb, revealing, and lengthy interview with Pete, conducted by our editor Howard Johnson. Of course, we had no reason at the time to suspect that Pete's demise was imminent. But looking back on the feature his words have become super poignant, highlighting a career that was, for the most part, bathed in gold and glory. Combined with the recent passing of his erstwhile UFO colleagues Paul Raymond and Paul Chapman, Pete's death has left us with a gaping hole in the world of rock. Although they were undoubtedly creatively and commercially successful, UFO never really attained the massive success many expected, and international superstar status always remained frustratingly just out of their grasp. But despite this, many fans recognise the band as one of the most influential rock groups ever. Their legacy is assured.

In this issue of *Rock Candy Mag* we have a massive feature dedicated to the Scorpions, whose own career is inextricably linked to UFO because of the shared Michael Schenker connection. Scorps singer Klaus Meine spearheads an in-depth analysis of the band's hugely successful 1990 album, 'Crazy World', featuring the global smash hit single 'Wind Of Change'. A crack *Rock Candy Mag* team of Malcolm Dome, Dave Reynolds, and Jason Arnopp talk to the band to unpack some fascinating insights into this monumental period in the Germans' career. Elsewhere we've got an overview of the very fractious 1992 North American joint headline tour that featured Metallica and Guns N' Roses, a fascinating look at Foreigner's days with vocalist Johnny Edwards, and a revealing Holly Knight interview. She's a songwriter to the stars and a hugely talented artist in her own right, and if you've never heard of Holly you'll be surprised by what you read.

As always, we wish you all the very best of health and hope that this issue of *Rock Candy Mag* helps to ease the way from a somewhat restrained summer into a really rockin' autumn.

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THIS ISSUE'S BIG QUESTION – WHICH ROCK ACT SHOULD HAVE BEEN MEGA BUT SOMEHOW NEVER MADE IT TO THE TOP?

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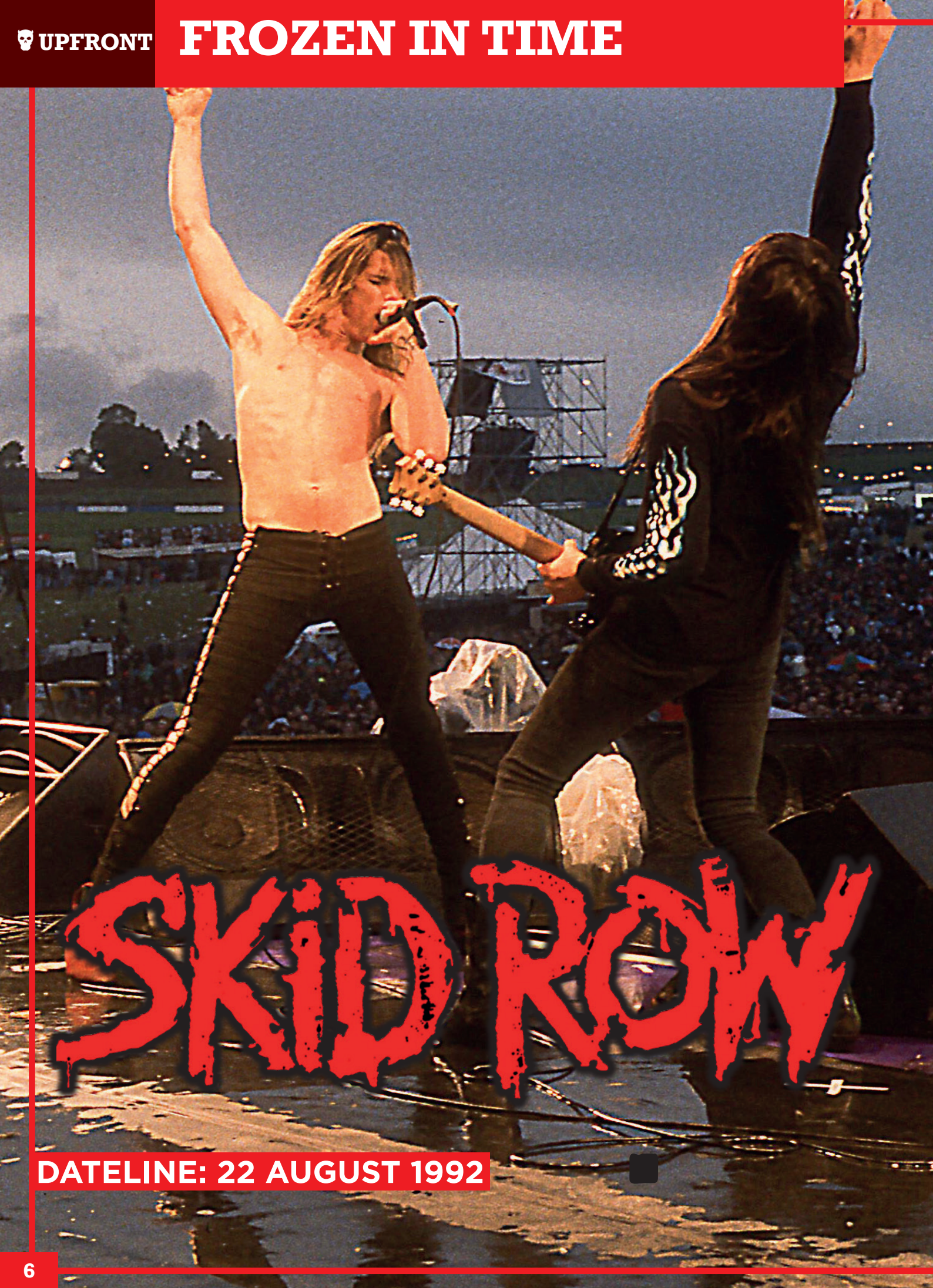
FROZEN IN TIME



DATELINE: 22 AUGUST 1992

They were the youth gone wild...

THE RISE OF SKID Row was meteoric by anyone's standards. Formed in 1986 in Toms River, New Jersey, the band was a smash hit success by August of 1989 after their debut album 'Skid Row' hit the *Billboard* Top 10 and eventually went five times platinum in the US. Was this down to luck? A striking image? Hooky metal songs? A charismatic pretty boy singer? Well all of these things played their part, but surely nothing was as important in Skid Row's rapid ascent as guitarist Dave 'Snake' Sabo's childhood friendship with Jon Bongiovi.

THE YEAR Skid Row formed, Bon Jovi's 'Slippery When Wet' album was on its way to becoming one of rock's biggest selling albums of all time, shifting over 25 million copies. When they were kids Jon and Snake had promised each other that whoever made it as a rock star first would give the other a leg up. Once he was the biggest thing in pop metal Jon Bon Jovi was true to his word, helping Skid Row out with prestigious Bon Jovi opening slots and bringing the band to the attention of his own high-powered manager Doc McGhee. McGhee got the band signed to Atlantic and once MTV got their teeth into Skid Row frontman Sebastian Bach the rest quickly became history.

OF COURSE it couldn't all be sweetness and light. A crappy deal saw Skid Row giving up the lion's share of their royalties to their publishers, who just happened to be Jon Bon Jovi and his guitarist Richie Sambora. This understandably soured things between the two camps for a while, as loudmouth Bach in particular railed in the press about the injustice of it all. Things eventually got sorted out after a fashion, but things were never quite the same between the two bands again. Too bad, but at least Skid Row were by that stage big enough in their own right not to need Bon Jovi's patronage to survive. When their second album, 'Slave To The Grind', was released in June of 1991 the band had become so important that the release instantly charted at number one in the US. What was most interesting, though, was that Skid Row used this album to shed their hair metal skin and reinvent themselves as a much tougher band. 'Slave To The Grind' wasn't thrash metal, but it certainly had a lot more in common with the intensity of Metallica than the easy-on-the-ear radio rock of Bon Jovi.

GIVEN THE emerging trend toward grunge and an outright rejection of hair metal Skid Row seemed to have pulled off a neat trick of the light. They appeared to have repositioned themselves just in time. When Skid Row performed at the 1992 Castle Donington Monsters Of Rock festival in the UK they still had the world at their feet. The weather that day was prophetically grungy, but Skid Row proved they had more than enough of the right stuff to carry things off. This shot of Bach and Sabo rocking out on a sodden stage with the Donington faithful huddling under umbrellas perfectly sums up a band that was tougher than many might at first have given them credit for.

THE SKID Row story didn't end well though. After laying low for a couple of years as grunge took an ever greater hold, the band returned in 1995 with the Bob Rock-produced 'Subhuman Race', a record that was well received by the critics but failed to sell in the same quantities as its predecessors. By the end of the following year Bach was no longer a member of the band, with stories circulating that the rest of the group – Sabo, bassist Rachel Bolan, drummer Rob Affuso, and guitarist Scotti Hill – had grown tired of the singer's loud-mouthed and cocky attitude.

SKID ROW are still active today, with former DragonForce vocalist ZP Theart fronting the group. Bach attempted to orchestrate a reunion of the original line-up to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the debut album – all to no avail. So it looks like we'll have to content ourselves with our memories of Skid Row in their pomp. Amazing photos like this make the job that much easier...

HOWARD JOHNSON

Photo: IconicPix/George Chin

STEP BACK IN TIME

APRIL–MAY 1989

ROCK CANDY'S **DAVE LING** LEAFS THROUGH THE BACK PAGES OF THE UK ROCK PRESS TO BRING THE BIG NEWS ITEMS OF THE DAY BACK TO LIFE AND ANALYSE HOW THOSE STORIES REALLY PLAYED OUT...

JOHN SYKES: "SELL SIX MILLION COPIES, BUY A HOUSE"

DATELINE: 19 APRIL–2 MAY 1989

MAGAZINE: *RAW*

BY 1989 GUITARIST JOHN Sykes had firmly established a reputation as both a talented guitarist and a man with a big mouth. As he returned to the fray with a new band, Blue Murder, Sykes was itching to discuss his role in his previous band, Whitesnake, and a spectacular fallout with vocalist David Coverdale before the huge US success of the '1987' album they collaborated on. The former Streetfighter, Tygers Of Pan Tang, and Thin Lizzy man was responsible for both writing and playing on the album, but was unceremoniously dumped before Coverdale took Whitesnake on the road to support the record.

If Sykes's arrival in Whitesnake – a band that he freely admitted he "really wasn't into" before joining – had set tongues wagging, then his abrupt dismissal rated among the biggest stories of the era. That's why the launch of Blue Murder, featuring bassist Tony Franklin and the much-travelled Carmine Appice on drums, made the new band cover material for corresponding issues of both *RAW* magazine and *Kerrang!*

IN HIS *RAW* interview Sykes informed Paul Suter that he was still reeling from David Coverdale's accusations of disloyalty from a number of his collaborators on the '1987' album. The former Deep Purple singer had interrupted work on the record to undergo a throat operation, and left alone to complete his parts for the record and unable to contact his boss, Sykes began to realise he was "getting the cold shoulder."

"[Producer] Mike Stone had been fired, God knows why! Neil [Murray, bass] and Aynsley [Dunbar, drums] had been fired, without being told."

John started to suspect the worst, but felt he "had to finish the album because after spending all that time and effort on it I didn't want anyone else coming in and doing the solos."

The eventual realisation that he'd been tossed aside with everyone else left Sykes feeling "murderous."

"He [Coverdale] never told anybody [they were sacked]. I wasn't being paid and I was turning down other gigs; that's why I'm annoyed when he says *he* didn't get any loyalty."

IN HAPPIER times Coverdale had gone all guns blazing to get Sykes into Whitesnake. "The band was

Photos: IconicPix/Annamaria DiSanto

playing really dated blues, but Coverdale insisted," Sykes said, exasperated. "He told me to name my price!"

Suter was incredulous that Coverdale had "canned the man who opened the door to America for him," with Sykes only too keen to acknowledge his role in the outlandish success of '1987'.

"As far as the writing was concerned, David just sat back and let me throw all the music at him," he explained. "I think he was happy to have this burst of fresh energy. Singers need a good kick up the arse sometimes to get them moving."

Sykes was always a great interview because he was so quick to make an undiplomatic comment. Here it was no exception when he explained why he hadn't joined Ozzy Osbourne back in 1982 before the job eventually went to Jake E. Lee.

"Ozzy was a bit inebriated at the time and went away to think about it," explained Sykes. "But I got offered the Thin Lizzy gig a week later. I had the best years of my life with Phil [Lynott]. He taught me so much."

FATAL ATTRACTION

Guitarist JOHN SYKES has now established a reputation as the man who played on the 'Whitesnake '87' LP. But his career goes back a lot further than that. Here, he explores his roots and talks about the trials and tribulations he's faced in getting together the current BLUE MURDER project.

IT'LL IT'S been a long time coming, but finally RAW brings you the full story on Blue Murder, the Los Angeles-based band featuring John Sykes (guitar/vocals), Carmine Appice (drums) and Tony Franklin (bass). We've heard the tunes on the debut self-titled album (reviewed this issue), we've seen the band play, and we can't just hoping that they'll prove to be worth all the fuss being made about them in advance — WE KNOW IT. At a time when far too many new projects are turning out to be about as exciting as a Wimpy cheeseburger, Blue Murder is caviar . . .

BLUE MURDER (L-R): TONY FRANKLIN, CARMINE APPICE AND JOHN SYKES

SYKES DID eventually turn his attention to the new Blue Murder project. His ex-Whitesnake buddy Cozy Powell had been hired as the band's first drummer until running out of patience as Sykes tried to get the debut album together. "He left. Cor, what a surprise!" Sykes giggled. Sykes seemed happy enough, however, to have replacement Carmine Appice joining former The Firm bassist Tony Franklin in the engine room. According to John the latter was a serendipitous appointment.

"Someone came into my studio and asked about my ideal band and I happened to mention Tony," Sykes grinned. "At which point they said: 'That's funny, he's my wife's cousin'!"

Erstwhile Black Sabbath vocalist Ray Gillen had fronted an early line-up of Blue Murder before being fired and moving on to Badlands. Undeterred, Sykes summoned the courage to step up to the mic himself. "In the end it didn't sound as bad as I expected, and I'm going to give it my best shot," he promised.

"The situation with Coverdale *did* knock the stuffing out of me," Sykes concluded, "But the royalties from '1987' do tend to soften blow. Sell six million copies, buy a house!"

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

DESPITE UNANIMOUS APPRECIATION OF his playing skills, since the formation of Blue Murder John Sykes's name has graced a mere handful of albums. 'Blue Murder' was initially welcomed with open arms, *Kerrang!* calling it "as indispensable a record as you're gonna hear all year," with Suter assuring the readers of *RAW*: "The last time I was this sure about a record was 1985; Night Ranger, Heart, and Mr. Mister. Two of them hit the US number one spot and all three made the Top 10."

Yet for all of the album's undeniable greatness, Suter was wrong about 'Blue Murder' as it only peaked at number 69 on the US charts. John would later theorise that Geffen, the label he shared with Whitesnake, "were trying to get me and David [Coverdale] back together" by deliberately under-promoting the Blue Murder project.

AN EVEN less successful follow-up, 'Nothin' But Trouble', emerged four years later in 1993 before Blue Murder simply fizzled out. In the aftermath Sykes clearly found it hard to get Thin Lizzy out of his system, fronting them during the post-Lynott era of 1996 to 2009.

Around 2012 he was touted as a member of supergroup The Winery Dogs before being replaced by Richie Kotzen. Bassist Billy Sheehan remarked that John was "wasn't on the same timetable" as himself and drummer Mike Portnoy.

SO FAR Sykes has managed to release just four solo studio albums in a quarter-century period, with a latest effort further delayed following a parting of the ways with label Golden Robot Records before any material had seen the light of day. Depending on your point of view John Sykes is either an enigmatic artist, or a horribly wasted talent.

The Blue Murder line-up that recorded the debut album. L-R: Tony Franklin (bass), John Sykes (lead vocals and guitar), Carmine Appice (drums)

STEP BACK IN TIME

Badlands performing live in Los Angeles, 1989

BADLANDS TRY TO EMULATE "THE GREAT BANDS FROM THE 1970S"

DATELINE: 27 MAY 1989

MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

AS THE ERA OF hair metal faded away at the end of the 1980s there suddenly seemed to be a desire to hear more organic music once more, something less obsessed with favouring style over substance. Badlands was one such band. Raised on Led Zeppelin, Humble Pie, and Mountain, the group members were keen to position themselves as nothing whatsoever to do with Mötley Crüe and Poison.

"We want Badlands to be like the great bands from the 1970s," guitarist Jake E. Lee told Howard Johnson. "Those bands played together and stayed together and that's the way we want it for us."

The group had been assembled by Lee and vocalist Ray Gillen following their respective sackings from Ozzy Osbourne's band and Blue Murder. And Badlands did sound like a band with genuine, organic soul.

"We wanted the music to be bluesy, and to show our influences without being beholden to them," explained Gillen. "While we were recording the album I was listening to 'Led Zeppelin III' a whole lot, I love that stomping, country, downhome feel of theirs."

Describing it as "righteously rocking yet possessed of a subtle beauty and charm that can't and won't be ignored," Johnson loved 'Badlands'. "It grows and grows," he wrote. "It's not the bull that runs down the hill and sh*gs a couple of the herd of cows. It's the bull that *walks* down and sh*gs *all of* the cows."

FOR GILLEN and Lee, Badlands represented independence. The singer was still smarting not only from rejection, but also disrespect from the boardroom.

"I was asked to leave Blue Murder due to outside record company pressure," he related, still surprised. "John Kalodner, one of the top people at Geffen, simply said I couldn't sing!"

Although Johnson believed this comment to be "one of the greatest miscarriages of justice in rock history," Gillen's response was simple: "I didn't get upset, although I thought I would. I just got real angry, because after all that hard work I had to start over again."

Once former Black Sabbath drummer Eric Singer was on board, Lee remembered Greg Chaisson (previously of Surgical Steel), a bass player excluded from the Ozzy Osbourne band auditions on the feeble grounds of his unfashionable looks, and Badlands was born. Right from the start, simplicity was the key.

"It took a while for our producer, Paul O'Neill, to realise that was what we wanted," Gillen said. "He's from the 'new school' of producers, so he likes to pile those guitars up and have a whole lot going on. We wanted the feel of a band jamming in a garage, which resulted in a lot of yelling and screaming before Paul realised what kind of a band we are."

BADLANDS WERE champing at the bit to get out on the road, with Gillen promising: "[Our live show] will be twice as powerful as the album and real raw, I guarantee you," he smiled. "And we'll make things more exciting still by breaking off into jam sessions. I'm so glad that things are gravitating back toward that direction. I always hated three-minute pop songs.

"One vocal, one guitar, bass and drums, that's all you need," continued Ray. "You won't make a million from the production; you make a million from having great songs. That's the yardstick by which we measure what we do."

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT Badlands had great songs. Sadly, though, they never made a million, and despite the vibes of peace, love, and brown rice that surrounded their formation things were destined to end in an uglier fashion.

Thanks largely to its MTV-approved video songs, 'Dreams In The Dark' and the more fragile 'Winter's Call', the 'Badlands' album appeared to have set the band on their way, climbing to number 57 in the US. It was only after Singer – later to become the permanent drummer for Kiss – was replaced by Jeff Martin on drums for its follow-up, 1991's 'Voodoo Highway', that problems with their record company Atlantic began. The second album's birth had been fragmented and interrupted, with the label unable to hear a hit and demanding they work with outside writers such as Desmond Child or Holly Knight, the hitmakers of the day. After a tense standoff they were finally allowed to finish the record alone, though Atlantic dropped the band when 'Voodoo...' stalled at number 140.

GOOD
FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

IN THE build-up to a UK tour Jake E. Lee gave a controversial interview to *Kerrang!* in which he blamed Gillen for Atlantic's lack of support. The singer had secretly told the label that the band had a more commercial batch of songs that sounded more like Whitesnake or The Cult – only he refused to play them for the 'suits'.

With the tour's first gig in Bristol just a week away Lee announced that Badlands had replaced Gillen with a female singer named Debby Holiday. By the time the band arrived in the country Gillen had mysteriously returned to the ranks. Neil Jeffries reviewed an extremely awkward performance at the Astoria in London where Badlands co-headlined with Mother's Finest. The guitarist interrupted the show to wave a copy of *Kerrang!* in the air and tell the crowd "there are two sides to every story," though Gillen shook his head and mouthed the words, "It's all true..."

ALTHOUGH JEFFRIES praised the gig Badlands couldn't continue as they were and a tit-for-tat *Kerrang!* interview saw Gillen declare that: "Jake couldn't wear Eddie Van Halen's f*cking socks."

Unsurprisingly the singer was given the boot, going on to form the band Sun Red Sun. Having been diagnosed with AIDS, Gillen passed in December 1993 aged just 34. An unreleased third album from Badlands, 'Dusk', was made available in 1998. Though the band burned out in very public fashion, and in doing so failed to realise their vast potential, the quartet's musical legacy is still fondly remembered today.

Badlands guitarist Jake E. Lee

Photos: IconicPix/Joe Giron; IconicPix/Annamaria DiSanto

STEP BACK IN TIME

The Kingdom Come line-up that recorded 'In Your Face'. L-R: Rick Steier (rhythm guitar), Danny Stag (lead guitar), Lenny Wolf (vocals), James Kottak (drums), Johnny B. Frank (bass)

KINGDOM COME: "YOU CAN HATE US, BUT WE SOLD A MILLION."

DATELINE: 29 APRIL 1989
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

A WHIFF OF THE unsaid hung in the air as *Kerrang!* magazine's Elianne Halbersberg sat down to talk to Kingdom Come drummer James Kottak about the band's second album, 'In Your Face'. A year earlier the US-German quintet had taken the world by storm with a rather controversial eponymous debut that, according to their detractors, modelled itself just a little too closely on Led Zeppelin. The situation had been inflamed when frontman Lenny Wolf told *Kerrang!* that he'd never even heard of Led Zeppelin. Pull the other one! Even Gary Moore had taken at pop at the band with his piss-take song 'Led Clones'.

UNDERSTANDABLY KOTTAK was determined to avoid what his verbal opponent termed the "Z-word", dismissing the subject as "old news" and "boring". He poured scorn on his experiences of two-faced journalists with "no balls".

"They kissed up to the band in person, then turned around and slagged us in print," he seethed. With the debut album selling extremely well, Kingdom Come were in an unassailable position anyway. "We haven't dwelled upon the negative press at all," Kottak insisted. "We just say: 'Screw it'. If you don't like it, you don't have to buy it."

Like the rest of the group he knew some writers were now willing them to fail.

"Oh yeah," he nodded. "There are a lot of scumbags that want to see that happen. I don't know why. Quite often when a band has a successful first album they get slagged. We don't care. The fans are the ones who are most important to us. Critics get their albums for free. All the critics in the world can hate us and we'll still have sold a million records. No one can deny that."

OF COURSE, those same detractors would have suggested that spending the better part of 1988 touring in a dozen countries, including playing in front of 1.5 million people on the US Monsters Of Rock package, in addition to opening in arenas for the Scorpions, would allow almost anyone a pretty good shot at first-time success.

"We put out the album hoping it would sell 200,000 copies," Kottak admitted. "Our theory was: 'We've got a shot, we'll work as hard as we can to make it successful.' By the end of the Scorpions tour it was like a train rushing downhill with no brakes. Our confidence peaked when we played for 50,000 people in Tokyo with Bon Jovi, Britny Fox, and RATT, and then headlined four gigs of our own."

THOUGH THEY exchanged Bob Rock for Keith Olsen as producer second time around, Kingdom Come hadn't hung around in attempting to maintain momentum.

"We wrote the majority of the material backstage, pre-show, on the bus, and in hotels," explained Kottak. "We got off the road with the Scorpions and went into pre-production. It took us about six weeks total to record and mix."

Given the elbowing of the "Z-word" there was no discussion of musical progression. Kottak said simply: "When we write we're just trying to come up with great songs. We're not worried about hits or airplay."

Touring plans were still to be confirmed. "I'm sure we'll get something [i.e. a decent support slot] by the summertime, but if not we'll headline smaller venues. It doesn't matter to me – as long as we're out there."

Photos: IconicPix/George Chin

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

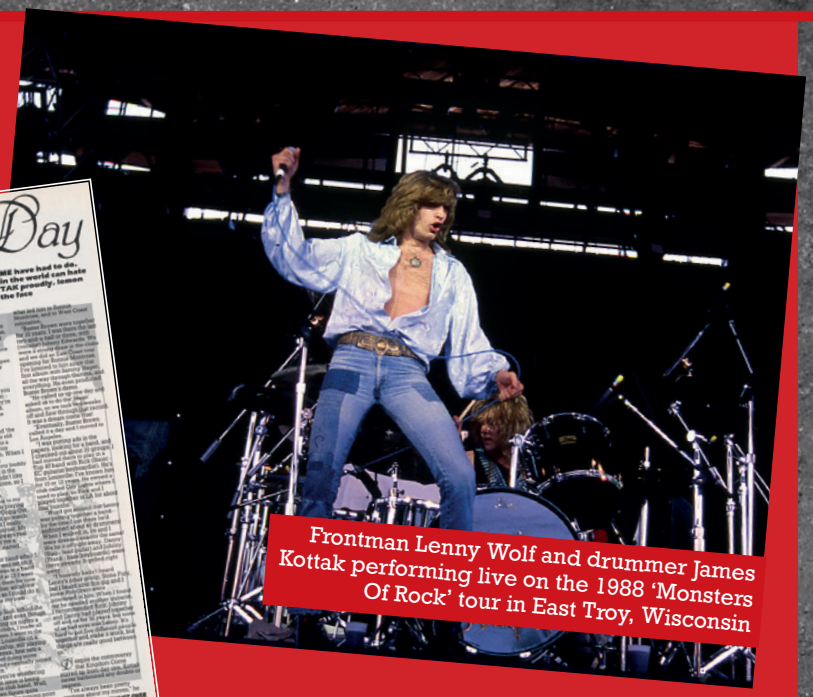
HALBERSBERG'S CONVERSATION WITH JAMES

Kottak was a strange one. Given the creditable artistic leap from 'Kingdom Come' to 'In Your Face' the drummer's reticence in stressing a new-found independence was tough to comprehend. Having made what was a much less derivative second statement you really would have thought he'd want to broadcast the fact.

Instead, it was left to those Kingdom Come chose to pillory – the rock press – to sing the praises of 'In Your Face'. *Kerrang!*'s Derek Oliver awarded 'In Your Face' four Ks, using RATT, Dokken, and Tesla as yardsticks, while declaring it "nothing new, nothing shocking, but done exceedingly well." In the pages of *RAW* Sylvie Simmons echoed: "When Kingdom Come find their own style – without being pushed into it by outside forces – I think they're going to be a fine band."

Facing The Day

- - - (or rather the second album) is exactly what KINGDOM COME have had to do, following the success of their Zep-cloning debut. "All the critics in the world can hate us and we'll still have sold a million records" puffs JAMES KOTTAK proudly. Loosen up, Juice dripping. ELIANNE HALBERSBERG gets it in the face


Frontman Lenny Wolf and drummer James Kottak performing live on the 1988 'Monsters Of Rock' tour in East Troy, Wisconsin

IN ORDER to overturn a few preconceptions Kingdom Come would have to display some good old-fashioned grit. In the end they were close to securing a second successive gold disc for 'In Your Face' when the wheels came off. In spite of Kottak's boast, 'Kingdom Come' failed to get past the status of half-a-million sales.

Ultimately, though, the drummer was destined for bigger things. After making one album with the US band Wild Horses, and an LP with the McAuley Schenker Group, Kottak joined the Scorpions in 1996, going on to become their longest-lasting percussionist before being removed for addiction issues some 20 years later. Unlike Lenny Wolf, who was replaced by Keith St John of Montrose and Burning Rain fame, the drummer was a part of a Kingdom Come that reunited in 2018 for live dates to celebrate the 30th anniversaries of the two albums.

Wolf had kept the band's name active into the current millennium with a string of lesser-known releases, but according to Kottak can now most likely be deemed retired.

SNIPPETS – SHORT, SHARP SHOCKS FROM APRIL–MAY 1989

NIKKI SIX THREATENS TO "SCREW" MATTHEW TRIPPE

DATELINE: 1 APRIL 1989
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

A furious Mötley Crüe bassist Nikki Sixx turned violent when *Kerrang!* brought up the subject of his so-called 'impersonator', Matthew Trippe. The whole experience had made Sixx paranoid. "Now I not only live in a gated community, but I have gates around my house and a massive alarm system," the bassist revealed. "I also have loaded machine guns."

W.A.S.P. WILL NEVER STOP PERFORMING 'ANIMAL...'

DATELINE: 5-18 APRIL 1989
MAGAZINE: *RAW*

Despite W.A.S.P.'s attempt to re-brand the band as political with their fourth album, 'The Headless Children', frontman Blackie Lawless vowed to continue performing the banned single 'Animal (F*ck Like A Beast)'. "If you think it's bad then you've got no sense of humour," Lawless told Dave Ling. In fact, the song was withdrawn when Blackie became a born-again Christian during the mid-2000s.

IOMMI WANTS ALL OF THE SILLY RUMOURS TO STOP

DATELINE: 1 APRIL 1989
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

Tony Iommi set out to correct a whole slew of crazy myths surrounding Sabbath in an interview to promote their excellent 'Headless Cross' album. "We are prepared to end all of the speculation and rumours, like: 'Is Tom Jones in the band, or isn't he?'" the guitarist told Howard Johnson.

MY FIRST GIG

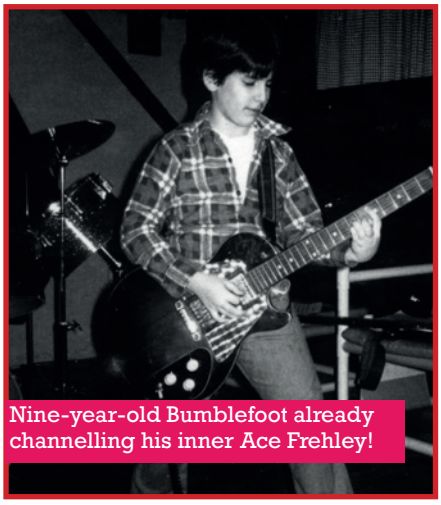
DATELINE: 24 JULY 1979, NEW YORK CITY

"I WAS TRANSFIXED"

Kiss busy impressing the young Ron Thal at Madison Square Garden in '79

SONS OF APOLLO GUITARIST AND FORMER **GUNS N' ROSES** MAN **RON 'BUMBLEFOOT' THAL** ON THE JOY OF SEEING KISS AGED JUST NINE!

"KISS IS THE REASON why I wanted to be in a band. When I was five years old my family moved from Brooklyn in New York out to Staten Island. A load of kids my age in the neighbourhood had older brothers and sisters, and through them I got to hear some amazing albums. Kiss 'Alive!' really made an impact and as a result my friends and I started our own band called Target. I was six years old, but even when I was so little I was really determined to be in a band like Kiss.



Nine-year-old Bumblefoot already channelling his inner Ace Frehley!

"I'D WANTED to see the band live for a while, but my parents wouldn't let me go because I was too young. On 24 July 1979 the band played Madison Square Garden on the 'Dynasty' tour – the first of two nights at the venue – and I was finally allowed to see them. I was nine years old! There was a whole bunch of us; my mum, my brother, two friends and their mums.

"I had no clue that two bands were on the bill, and the first thing I saw when I got inside the venue was a keyboard onstage and a sign saying 'New England' on the drum kit. I got scared. I wondered what had happened to Kiss, the band I loved. Why had they changed their name and, even more worryingly, why did they now have a keyboard?

"Somebody quickly explained that this wasn't actually Kiss, but a different band that was going to play a short set before the headliners. What a relief! Now I could relax and check out this other band. As it turned out New England were amazing. They'd just released their debut album and made such an impact on me that the next day I went to my local record store to buy it. I still love New England to this day and can still play every song from that album on guitar.

"KISS TURNED out to be everything I wanted. Their show was incredible. From the moment they burst onto the stage I was transfixed. We were on the first balcony, which was quite a long way from the stage, but when the traditional Kiss pillars of fire pyros shot up I could still feel the heat. I remember Ace Frehley's smoking guitar and Gene Simmons breathing fire as he 'flew' through the air. The whole thing was a real rock'n'roll spectacle. I think that because I was so young at the time I have a hard time remembering the songs Kiss played that night. For me it was all about the visual extravaganza!

"I'VE SEEN Kiss lots since and have also been lucky enough to jam with Ace a few times. In 2013, I got to play live with Ace and [drummer] Peter [Criss] on 'Love Her All I Can' from the 'Dressed To Kill' album. I don't think I told the guys that I'd first seen them when I was only nine years old, because I really didn't want to come across as a total fanboy! But what a thrill it was for me to play with my first musical heroes!"

Interview by Malcolm Dome. Photos: Getty Images/Robin Platzer/IMAGES; Getty Images/Gie Knaeps

DEREK SHERINIAN

THE PHOENIX

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returns with 'The Phoenix',
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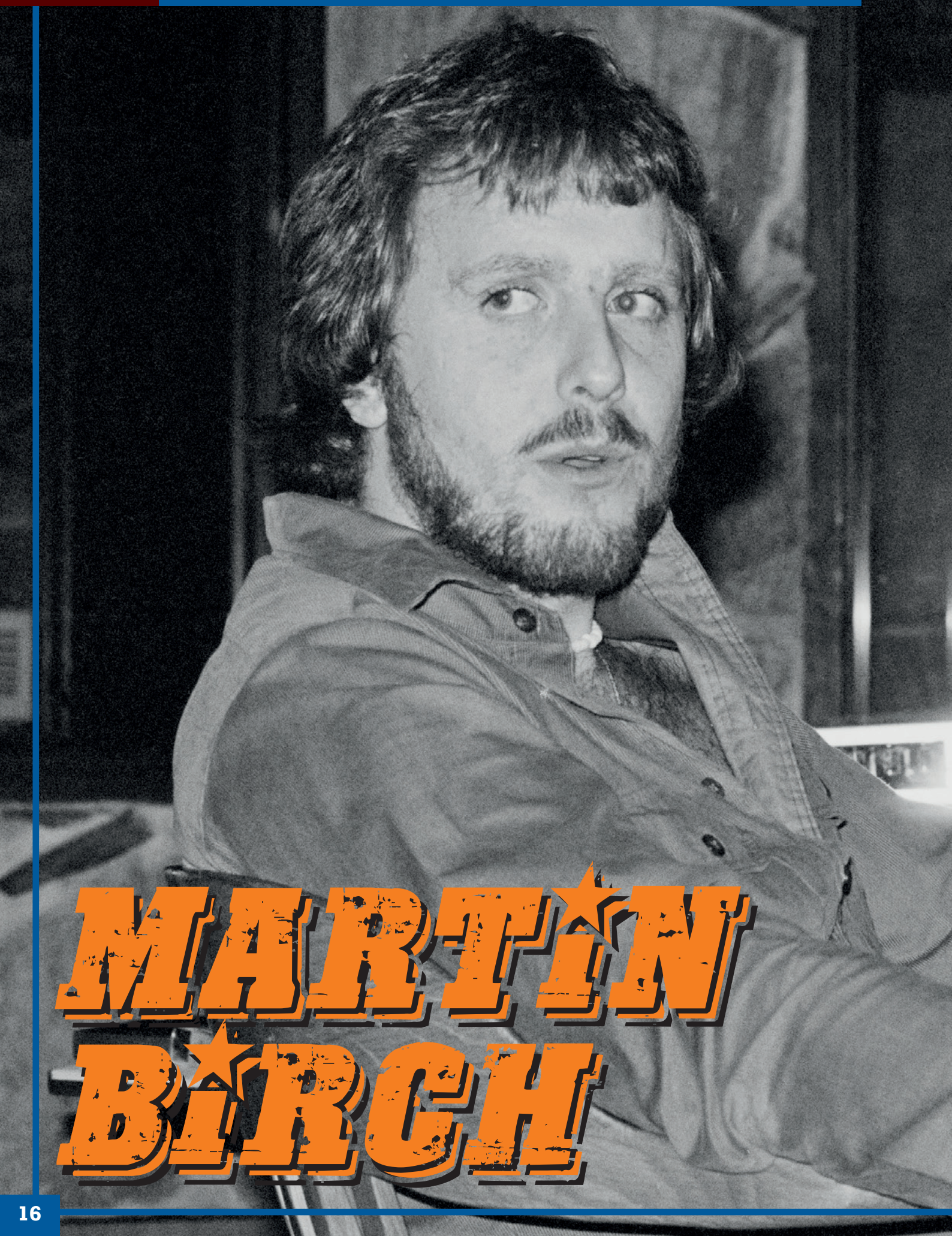
PERSON OF INTEREST

ROCK CANDY SALUTES THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS WHO DID THINGS DIFFERENTLY...



MARTIN BIRCH

IF, LIKE ME, YOU grew up in the late '70s loving heavy rock, then Martin Birch was your go-to producer guy. It felt like every time you picked up an album sleeve in a record shop Birch's name would be there. Whether it was Rainbow or Whitesnake, Black Sabbath or Blue Öyster Cult, Martin Birch looked like the producer everyone wanted working on their albums.

Of course, back then I knew nothing of the early career of the man from Surrey in England. I had no clue that he'd cut his musical teeth with Fleetwood Mac, initially as an engineer on 1969's 'Then Play On' album, when he would have been just 20 years old. After engineering two more Mac albums Birch stepped up to produce 1973's 'Penguin' and 'Mystery To Me' from the same year. But by that time he'd already started working with Wishbone Ash and, more significantly, Deep Purple. It was a relationship that would establish Martin as a top class heavy rock producer and engineer and yield 10 of the band's classic era recordings. Let's face it, what rock fan didn't know and love his work on 'Machine Head', 'Made In Japan' and 'Stormbringer'?

BIRCH'S PURPLE credentials led to him producing both Purple offshoot bands, Rainbow (with guitarist Ritchie Blackmore) and Whitesnake (with singer David Coverdale), which was surely a tricky tightrope to walk when you consider how the group's volatile band members had fallen out. Nonetheless it was testimony to Birch's ability to get along with everyone, to his understated manner, calm authority in the studio and ability to diffuse tension with a quiet quip.

Given that Birch worked with such high-profile bands it was perhaps surprising that he shunned the limelight himself. But then again, maybe his complete disinterest in fame meant that he was a vital component in a recording studio where there would always be large numbers of competing egos. There really weren't too many Martin Birch interviews to be found in the British music press at the time. And believe me, I looked. He always preferred to let the music do the talking and his organic, warm-sounding records always drew out the humanity of a music that could descend into sonic chaos if you weren't too careful.

THROUGHOUT THE 1970s Birch worked exclusively with a trusted coterie of musicians, almost all of whom had Purple connections. But as the '80s started to unfold, he began a recording relationship with Iron Maiden and it quickly became apparent that he'd found a group of kindred spirits for the new decade. After the band's first album had been roundly trampled on by the critics for its poor production, Maiden persuaded Birch to come on board for 1981's 'Killers' album and he stayed for the next 11 years, overseeing the sonics on what was undoubtedly Maiden's golden era.

Martin produced albums for the likes of the Michael Schenker Group and Whitesnake in the early '80s, but eventually gave up working with any other band and dedicated himself to Iron Maiden exclusively. He was only 32 at the time he started working with them, but had already enjoyed huge success, not to mention the financial benefits that came with it. With Maiden leader Steve Harris convinced that Birch was the perfect man to capture his band's sound, Maiden were dedicated to making sure that Birch would have no reason to look elsewhere. 1982's 'The Number Of The Beast' became a worldwide smash, money started pouring in, and Maiden were prepared to pay handsomely to make sure Martin Birch was theirs and theirs alone.

IN 1990 I got the chance to meet Martin on a number of occasions. In a rare sojourn outside of music writing I'd joined Maiden's Sanctuary management group and worked closely with the band day to day between '90 and '92. In that first year Maiden were in the process of recording the 'No Prayer For The Dying' album using a mobile studio at Steve Harris's country home in Essex. I often joined them there and was always surprised by Martin's absolute discretion. He was almost like a ghost in the room, never saying too much, but always there.

He definitely had a twinkle in his eye, though, and while I never saw him myself, Martin's alter ego 'Marvin' was legendary in the Maiden camp. Apparently Martin was always in danger of turning into 'Marvin' during one of the heavy drinking sessions that punctuated the work process. And if that transformation happened you had to strap yourself in for a bumpy ride, because literally anything could occur, usually involving mass destruction.

It was clear that Martin was a much-loved member of the Maiden inner sanctum, so it came as a real surprise to me when in 1992, after I'd already left the Maiden camp myself, Martin announced his retirement after co-producing 'Fear Of The Dark' with Steve Harris. Did Harris's burgeoning interest in production hasten Birch's departure? Only he knew for sure, I guess, but at the tender age of just 43 Martin Birch hung up his headphones for good.

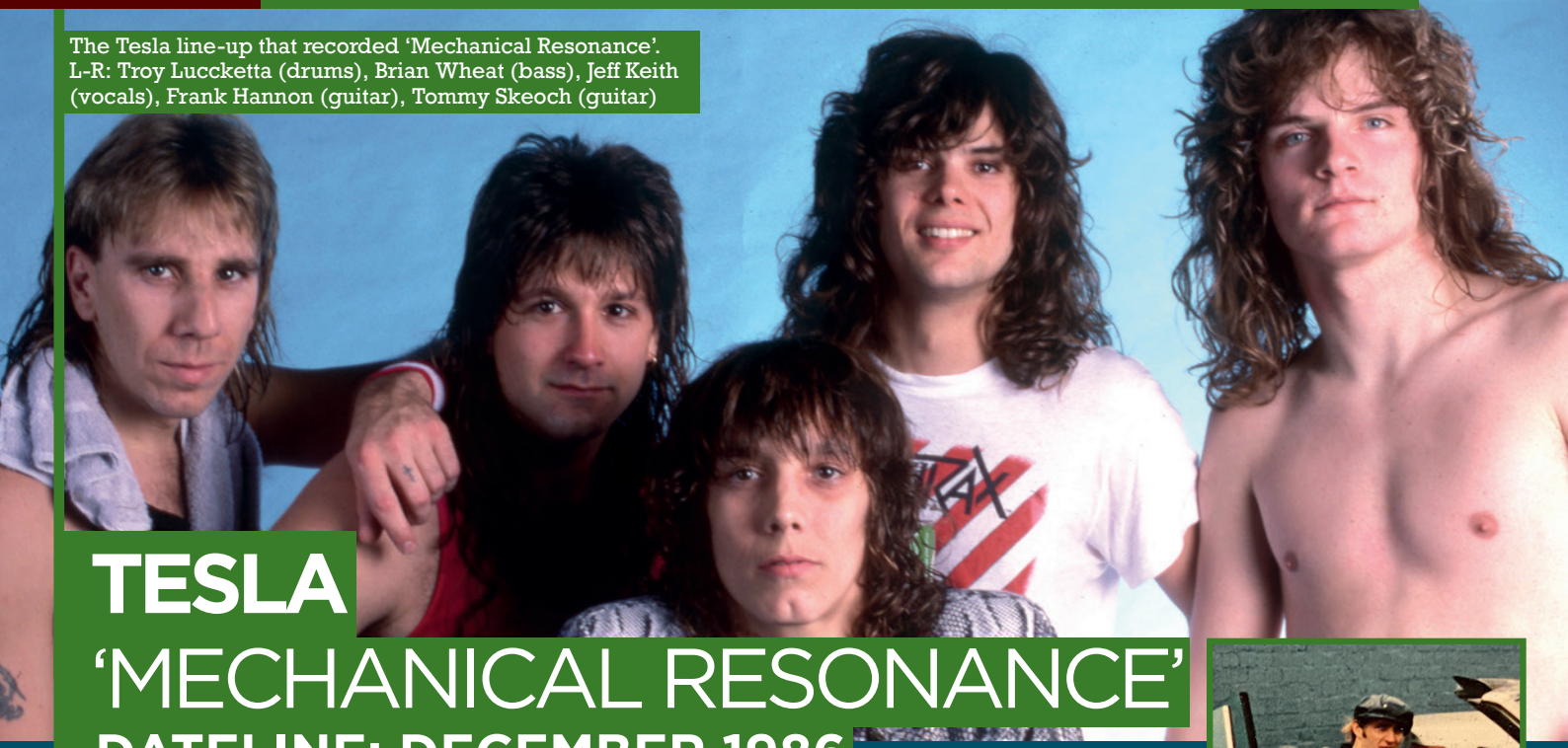
I EMAILED Maiden manager Rod Smallwood to see if he could confirm my belief that Martin had simply given up producing rock bands. "As far as we know he never did anything else," confirmed Rod, while cheekily adding. "I think he just played golf after that!"

It strikes me as a little odd that a man who had such passion for the recording process could suddenly turn his back on his profession. But then again, Martin Birch always seemed to me like a pretty singular bloke.

When news came through on 9 August that Martin had died at the age of 71 the eulogies poured forth from the many musicians who'd worked with him, including Maiden, David Coverdale, and Geezer Butler. Fittingly it was Maiden who summed up Martin Birch best. "Simply one of the greatest people we have ever worked with."

Words: Howard Johnson. Photo: Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns

CLASSIC ALBUM SLEEVE



The Tesla line-up that recorded 'Mechanical Resonance'. L-R: Troy Luccketta (drums), Brian Wheat (bass), Jeff Keith (vocals), Frank Hannon (guitar), Tommy Skeoch (guitar)

TESLA
'MECHANICAL RESONANCE'
DATELINE: DECEMBER 1986

Visual design artist **Nick Egan** (*right*) explains how a photographer's 'painting with light' allowed him to create this fabulous iconic sleeve...

"MY BACKGROUND IN MUSIC wasn't metal at all. I started out designing single sleeves for The Clash and ended up working with [Sex Pistols manager] Malcolm McLaren. I did spend some time on the road with Motörhead in the early '80s, but that was only because my mate was in charge of the merchandising! So my metal credentials were thin. But I moved from London to New York in the mid-'80s and of course I couldn't help but be aware of the hair metal scene that was huge in the States at that time. But the typical thing of putting those bands on album covers tarted up and surrounded by semi-naked girls didn't appeal to me, to be honest.

"AS FAR as I recall, one day I got a call from Robin Sloane, who was the creative director at Geffen Records, and who I'd worked with before. She told me about this hard rock band called Tesla and how they wanted a cover for their debut album. She explained a little bit about where the band name came from and how the members were totally obsessed by [the inventor and electrical engineer] Nikola Tesla. She said that they were looking for a different type of sleeve, something more in the classic vein of Led Zeppelin rather than the regular hair metal stuff. That intrigued me a little bit.

"I had a meeting with the band's A&R guy Tom Zutaut, some other Geffen folk, and one or two band members. I liked the guys, and I was impressed by the fact that they really *were* into Nikola Tesla; it wasn't just a gimmick dreamed up by the Geffen marketing department. They knew everything about him and they explained the concept of mechanical resonance to me, this idea that you could bring buildings down with certain vibrations. They told me that would be the album title and showed me a photo of Tesla sitting in a room reading a book, with all this mad electricity spewing out everywhere. Immediately I could see potential for an interesting cover.

"NOT TOO long before I'd met a photographer called Dean Chamberlain. He was like a mad scientist doing this thing he called 'light painting'. He'd work in a room that was completely dark, open the shutter of the camera on a long exposure and then would go round making shapes and colours with various lights in his hand that he'd then capture on film. I thought his work was amazing and would fit the Tesla concept perfectly.

"I spent a day with Dean working in the pitch black to get the effects you can see on the cover. Nowadays you could do it pretty easily with Photoshop, but back then it was all trial and error. We didn't really know what we'd got until the film came back from the lab, so it was pretty random. But when we saw the way the pictures had turned out we were thrilled. The whole thing had a supernatural feel to it. It had that Frankenstein, laboratory thing going on, which I really loved. I was blown away by the richness of the colours and the feeling of electricity running through the photo. With such great imagery to work with I knew I had to keep the design of the cover simple, which is what I did, of course. To me the final version felt like an American version of a Led Zep cover and I hope and think it really resonated with people, because the album sold very well.

"GEFFEN RECORDS generally had an affinity with slightly more stylish acts and that's why this cover ended up the way it did. Everyone was thrilled with the way it turned out. I ended up doing a few rock sleeves as a result of the Tesla project, including stuff for The Cult and Faster Pussycat. I even worked with Tesla again on the cover for the 'Psychotic Supper' album in 1991. They were always interested in doing something that was a bit different and I'm still proud of what I did with the group."

Check out Nick's website at *www.nickegan.com*

Interview by Howard Johnson. Photo: Getty Images/Ross Marino

"I wanted to bring a lot of different feels together for this sleeve. I especially wanted there to be a certain resonance with electricity, because of Nikola Tesla of course. But I also wanted to show a connection between electricity and radio, and the world of broadcasting and entertainment. I thought it would be great to have something that looked like those old radio antenna images from the 1940s, the ones where they'd draw little lightning bolts to show that it was electricity that enabled you to actually broadcast. So we created this kind of art deco/art nouveau sphere to sit underneath the logo as a focal point for the 'lightning' that Dean created with his lighting. It worked out really well."

"You don't see electricity when it passes through your house, but it's always there, of course. I thought it was an interesting idea to kind of show something on the sleeve that you didn't normally notice, as if suddenly a filter had been removed and then you were getting the full picture."

"I wanted to keep the focus of the cover on the band name in the middle of the sleeve. A lot of record companies would have insisted on the name being at the top of the sleeve, but to their credit Geffen were very cool about the whole thing and let me do exactly what I wanted. The sleeve was done at a time when A&R men wielded a lot of power, more than the marketing departments. So with Tom Zutaut really behind the project I felt that there would be no interference, and I was right."

"That logo was all real, a great block of wood we made that was pretty big, maybe three feet wide. We sprayed it with metallic paint to make it look metal, then suspended it from a fishing line or something like that so that we would get that sense of depth in the cover."

"I was amazed by just how rich these colours looked when I saw the photos Dean had produced. There was no manipulation of any colour after the shot was taken. The image was processed normally and printed normally, so what you see is exactly as it was in the dark room."

"The typeface was the only thing on the cover that wasn't 'in camera'. It was a combination of two different typefaces that I got out of a book. I didn't want it to be too obtuse, but I wanted it to have some character all the same."

TESLA – 'MECHANICAL RESONANCE'

Released: 8 December 1986 Album length: 53.28 Produced by Steve Thompson and Michael Barbiero Engineered by Michael Barbiero Recorded at Bearsville Studios, Bearsville, New York, 1986.

1. EZ Come EZ Go (3.32) – Jeff Keith/Tommy Skeoch/Frank Hannon/Brian Wheat/Troy Luccketta
2. Cumin' Atcha Live (4.25) – Jeff Keith/Frank Hannon/Brian Wheat
3. Gettin' Better (3.20) – Jeff Keith/Frank Hannon
4. 2 Late 4 Love (3.50) – Jeff Keith/Tommy Skeoch/Frank Hannon/Brian Wheat/Troy Luccketta
5. Rock Me To The Top (3.38) – Jeff Keith/Tommy Skeoch
6. We're No Good Together (5.15) – Jeff Keith/Troy Luccketta/Frank Hannon
7. Modern Day Cowboy (5.19) – Jeff Keith/Frank Hannon/Tommy Skeoch
8. Changes (5.02) – Jeff Keith/Tommy Skeoch/Frank Hannon/Brian Wheat/Troy Luccketta
9. Little Suzi (4.55) – Jim Diamond/Tony Hymas
10. Love Me (4.15) – Jeff Keith/Frank Hannon/Brian Wheat
11. Cover Queen (4.32) – Jeff Keith/Frank Hannon
12. Before My Eyes (5.25) – Jeff Keith/Tommy Skeoch/Frank Hannon/Troy Luccketta

LINE UP:

Jeff Keith – lead vocals, backing vocals
Frank Hannon – acoustic and electric guitars, keyboards, mandolin, backing vocals
Tommy Skeoch – electric guitar, backing vocals
Brian Wheat – bass, backing vocals
Troy Luccketta – drums

INTRODUCING...

THE ALLMAN BETTS BAND

Devon Allman (*left*) and Duane Betts

ANYONE WHO KNOWS THEIR rock history will immediately be intrigued by this group. Formed in November 2018, The Allman Betts Band features Devon Allman, Duane Betts, and Berry Duane Oakley. All three are sons of key members of legendary Southern rock outfit The Allman Brothers Band.

Guitarist and vocalist Devon has been an active musician for many years already, working solo and in outfits including Devon Allman's Honeytribe and Royal Southern Brotherhood. He'd known Duane – also a guitarist and singer – since they were teenagers, so it was perhaps inevitable that the pair would end up collaborating. Bassist Oakley, meanwhile, whose father died in a motorcycle accident aged just 24 back in 1972, brings the third Allman Brothers Band connection.

OF COURSE having three blood relatives of such an influential group in one act has drawn attention from confirmed Allman Brothers fans. But this isn't a band that only exists on the back of a reputation earned by others. The Allman Betts Band's music is first class. Yes, it draws on the same roots their fathers explored, blending swampy blues-infused tunes with a number of down-home acoustic influences including country, bluegrass, and ballads. And it must also be said that Devon's vocals are a genetic echo of his father Gregg's mournful howl. But there's still something fresh and exciting about how this new-generation band is swinging with a current line-up completed by slide guitarist Johnny Stachela, keyboardist John Ginty, percussionist R Scott Bryan, and drummer John Lum.

THE ALLMAN Betts Band's first album release, 2019's 'Down To The River', really is worth a listen, featuring compulsive tracks such as 'All Night', 'Shinin'', 'Down To The River', and a nine-minute epic titled 'Autumn Breeze'. There's also a brilliant cover of Tom Petty's classic 'Southern Accents'. It's an album that evokes the spirit of the '70s with references to the Allman Brothers sound, of course, but also to other influences including Derek And The Dominos, Santana, early solo Eric Clapton, and The Marshall Tucker Band. There's some free-form extemporisation as you might expect. But there's nothing that's Grateful Dead-dreary here. The ad-libbing reminds me more of how thrilling it can be when someone like BB King lets loose.

SEEING AND hearing The Allman Betts Band at the UK's Ramblin' Man Fair last year I was impressed by a spellbinding set that took the audience on a righteous journey into the past, while also showing that this group's future is particularly bright. I particularly enjoyed Devon and Duane – who's a remarkable doppelganger of his father – unleashing a salvo of guitar histrionics.

With a new studio album, 'Bless Your Heart', showing that the band are in it for the long haul, it's my advice that *Rock Candy Mag* readers should check out The Allman Betts Band immediately. Your ears will thank you!

Words: Derek Oliver. Photo: Kaelan Barowsky

Armored Saint

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30/01/21 UK Southampton - The Loft
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The Orchard

FOREIGN

Back in 1990 vocalist **Johnny Edwards** was offered the chance to join **Foreigne**r, one of the most iconic bands of all time. But it wasn't the no-brainer decision you might have thought. *Malcolm Dome* talks to Edwards about his turbulent time in the group.

1989 ISN'T A VINTAGE time for Foreigner. Eight years have passed since the band hit a creative and commercial peak with '4', an album that alongside Journey's 'Escape' has come to define the very essence of AOR. In the meantime MTV has become a hugely important driver of record sales, ushering in a new era of hair metal where younger, thinner, more image-conscious acts are suddenly the order of the day. At the age of 44 Foreigner guitarist and band leader Mick Jones isn't exactly cut out for a TV station that likes its boys young and pretty. Singer Lou Gramm may be five years Jones's junior, but despite having a killer voice he's no Axl Rose in the visual stakes. And what's worse, the two main cogs in the Foreigner machine haven't exactly been presenting a united front of late. Both have released solo albums this year and it's an open secret that the two of them aren't getting along...

IT HAS to be said, though, not much of this is registering on the radar of Johnny Edwards. Why would it? He's a million miles away from the Foreigner camp at this point in time, just another singer trying to hustle his way to a major-label recording contract. The man from Louisville, Kentucky has been around the block a bit already, releasing two albums of glam-ish metal – 1984's 'Loud And Clear' and 1985's 'Sign Of Victory' – with a band called Buster Brown. He's even recorded an album, 1987's 'Mean', with respected guitar player Ronnie Montrose, followed by another one with drummer Carmine Appice's King Kobra a year later, titled 'King Kobra III'. Edwards has got the pipes, for sure, but nothing has really hit big for him. Nothing has made him a star.

"I guess you could call me a 20-year overnight sensation," laughs Edwards today, sitting on the porch

AFFAIRS

Johnny Edwards (centre) rocking an interesting look with Foreigner guitarist Mick Jones and drummer Dennis Elliott (right)

Photo: Alamy/DPA Picture Alliance

of his house in Louisville. "Even back then I'd been in endless bands and had done so many demos, sending them off to labels trying to get that elusive deal. Atlantic Records wanted to sign a band I was in called Northrup, but somehow we just couldn't get the deal over the line."

Still fiercely determined to pursue a career as a rock singer Edwards moved from northern California to LA to hook up with drummer James Kottak. The two of them had been in Buster Brown together, and so once again they gave it a shot, this time with a band called Wild Horses, not to be confused with the UK band of the same name. Finally a major label came through. Wild Horses landed a contract with Atlantic.

"It happened almost immediately," remembers Johnny. "We were excited and had started to work on songs when it was announced that Lou Gramm had left Foreigner."

Joining Foreigner was absolutely the last thing on Johnny Edwards's mind, though...

"But somehow a demo I'd done with Northrup ended up in the pile of vocalist demos that Mick Jones was listening to while he was ill in bed," Edwards explains. "I'm not sure how, though, because I didn't send it. Maybe it came from Atlantic. Mick's brother Kevin was in charge of filtering the demos and Mick told me later that a song I was singing called 'Ready For The Rain' was the one that caught his attention."

DESPITE BEING interested in another guy who'd sung for King Kobra called Mark Free, and a fella from a band called Hurricane named Kelly Hansen, Jones decided Edwards was the man for the job.

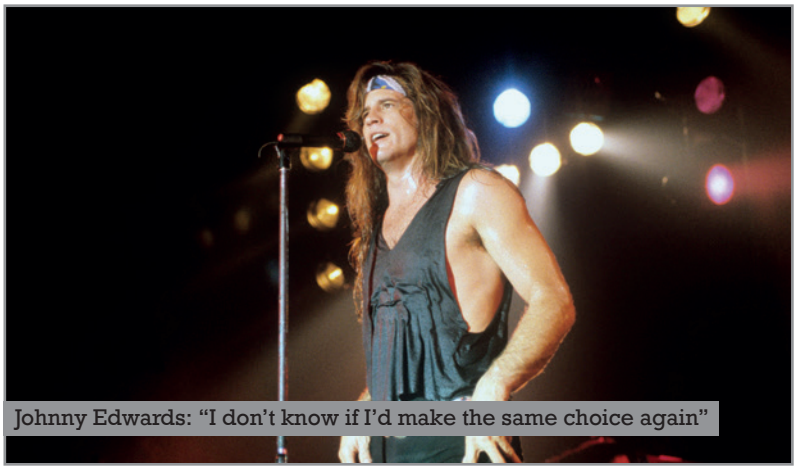
"Mick really liked my voice, so he flew over to LA

DARK DAYS

from New York in a private jet belonging to *Rolling Stone* magazine, with the mag's owner Jann Wenner. When we met, Mick told me that he wanted me to pack a bag immediately and fly back to New York with him on that same jet! I really wanted to stay with my buddies in Wild Horses and make that work, but Mick was so persuasive that I agreed to go to New York with him and see what happened."

Cue an extremely sticky situation with the other guys in Wild Horses.

"I was living in an apartment complex with James and Tony Bowles, the band's original guitarist. When I went back to pack the bag, they were there and obviously wanted to know what was happening. So I had to tell them I was on my way to New York and would maybe be joining Foreigner. It was really awkward and James was very upset, though he could understand why I was doing what I was doing."



Johnny Edwards: "I don't know if I'd make the same choice again"

"MICK WANTED TO MOVE FOREIGNER BACK TOWARD WHAT THEY'D DONE ON THE FIRST FOUR ALBUMS. THAT'S WHY HE WANTED ME, BECAUSE I WAS MORE OF AN OBVIOUS ROCKER THAN LOU. HE FELT THAT MOVE WOULD ALLOW HIM TO ESCAPE THE ACCUSATION OF FOREIGNER BEING TOO RELIANT ON BALLADS. THE PROBLEM WAS, IT WAS JUST TOO LATE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT."

When he arrived in New York Johnny rehearsed with the Foreigner line-up of Jones, bassist Rick Wills, and drummer Dennis Elliott. But he felt it was "just a formality" and that it had already been decided he was going to be the group's new singer. Not that landing the gig had him punching the air in delight.

"I did think the band were well past their peak and were on the way down," he admits. "But there were two reasons why I accepted the offer. Firstly, my wife was fed up being married to a starving musician and living with no money. Secondly, I was to a certain extent carried along by Mick's massive passion for having me in the band. Do I regret doing it now? Partly, yes. I would have loved to stay with Wild Horses and make a success of that band with those guys. Yet while we did have a major deal, who knows where that would have ended? How many others sign to big labels and disappear? There were no guarantees."

As it turned out Wild Horses recruited John Levesque to replace Johnny, released one album, 'Bareback', in 1991, and promptly split up.

EDWARDS WAS delighted to be included as a writer in the Foreigner set-up from the get-go.

"The people who ran Foreigner were Mick and his manager Bud Prager. It was their band and that was clear from the start. But I'll always give Mick huge credit and respect for the way he wanted me to become his writing partner straight away. I had about 25 songs in my pocket and played them all to Mick at his apartment. Most of them were terrible, but there were a few good ones too.

"Mick and I set about getting material together for an album. 'Ready For The Rain', the song Mick had heard and really liked on my demo, was one I brought in, of course. And the two of us also got about half a dozen other numbers into rough shape."

Producer Terry Thomas, who'd been a founder member of rock band Charlie, soon came into the picture.

"Terry was managed by Bud Prager as well, so it seemed predestined that he would be brought in to work with us. In fact, he was crucial to the whole process," says Edwards. "Not only is he a fine producer, but he's also an excellent songwriter. Terry took the songs Mick and I had been developing and helped to get them into a finished form. He was worth his writing credits on those songs, because without him they wouldn't have come out as well."

There have been reports over the years that Thomas was distinctly unhappy about a Foreigner album without Lou Gramm. Edwards is surprised by this...

"It may be true that Terry believed the album would flop without Lou, but he definitely didn't express those feelings to me. Maybe he was trying to spare *my* feelings. But then again, would he have carried on working on an album if he was convinced it was doomed to fail? When you think about it he'd already produced an album for Bad Company after Paul Rodgers had left and Brian Howe had taken over [1988's 'Dangerous Age']. So if nothing else he was used to collaborating with a band who'd replaced a legendary frontman.

"All I can tell you is that I found Terry to be a fine producer and I got along well with him. It was thanks to Terry that everything sounds so strong on the album. I don't remember there being any problems."

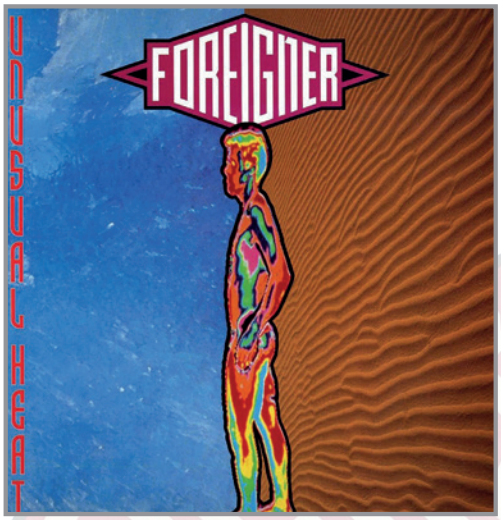
JOHNNY'S FIRST album with Foreigner, 'Unusual Heat', was released on 14 June 1991, but it was a major commercial disappointment. In the States it only reached number 117 on the *Billboard* album charts and had the dubious distinction of being the first Foreigner album *not* to sell a million copies.

"It didn't shock me that the album sold poorly when compared to what Foreigner had done previously," says Edwards. "I could tell the band was in decline. Foreigner was then considered a band for the Adult Contemporary market, which made it very hard to get new songs on the radio. By 1991 radio stations that played this sort of music already had their list of songs for airplay totally locked in – and they haven't changed those playlists since!

Mick Jones during a rare Foreigner live performance in support of the 'Unusual Heat' album

"The whole musical climate had altered too. People wanted to listen to the sort of alternative rock that was coming out of Seattle. I was a big fan of Foreigner, but they'd become the epitome of corporate rock. A lot of people were turned off by that.

"When we only sold about 400,000 copies of the album in America it was obviously disappointing. But honestly, I could see it coming. Mick wanted to move Foreigner back toward what they'd done on the first four albums and return to being a rock band. That's why he wanted me, because I was more of an obvious rocker than Lou. He felt that move would allow him to escape the accusation of Foreigner being too reliant on ballads. The problem was, it was just too late to do anything about it. There was too much negativity around the album.



"I don't know whether Atlantic should have put more effort into pushing the album and singles," muses Johnny. "To be honest I've no clue what they did or didn't do. But I can tell you that any airplay the singles 'Lowdown And Dirty' and 'I'll Fight For You' got was most likely down to Bud Prager. He had a team of old school radio pluggers working for him and I'm sure that was why we got at least *some* support from stations across the US.

"I know Mick was very disappointed that Atlantic failed to get fully behind the album. I understand why he felt like that, but it all came down to the prevailing trends of the time. What we did was out of step with the realities of grunge dominating everything. You can understand why the label would look elsewhere for artists who'd sell, and to some extent that sidelined Foreigner."

THE BAND only did 35 dates supporting 'Unusual Heat', which was hardly an extensive spell on the road.

"I wasn't involved at all in the booking of the shows, so have no idea whether that was always the plan, or whether a load of gigs were cancelled because things weren't going well. But my feeling is that it's the former. I never heard anyone connected to the band mention that we'd had to cancel dates. The venues we played were a mixture of arenas, open air spaces, and theatres, with one or two bars thrown in. In general good crowds were turning up."

The band's stock had clearly dropped, though, and touring was no longer 'no expenses spared'.

"Early on we had a private plane, which was the way the band had got used to travelling. But then it was decided go back to using a tour bus, because it was cheaper."

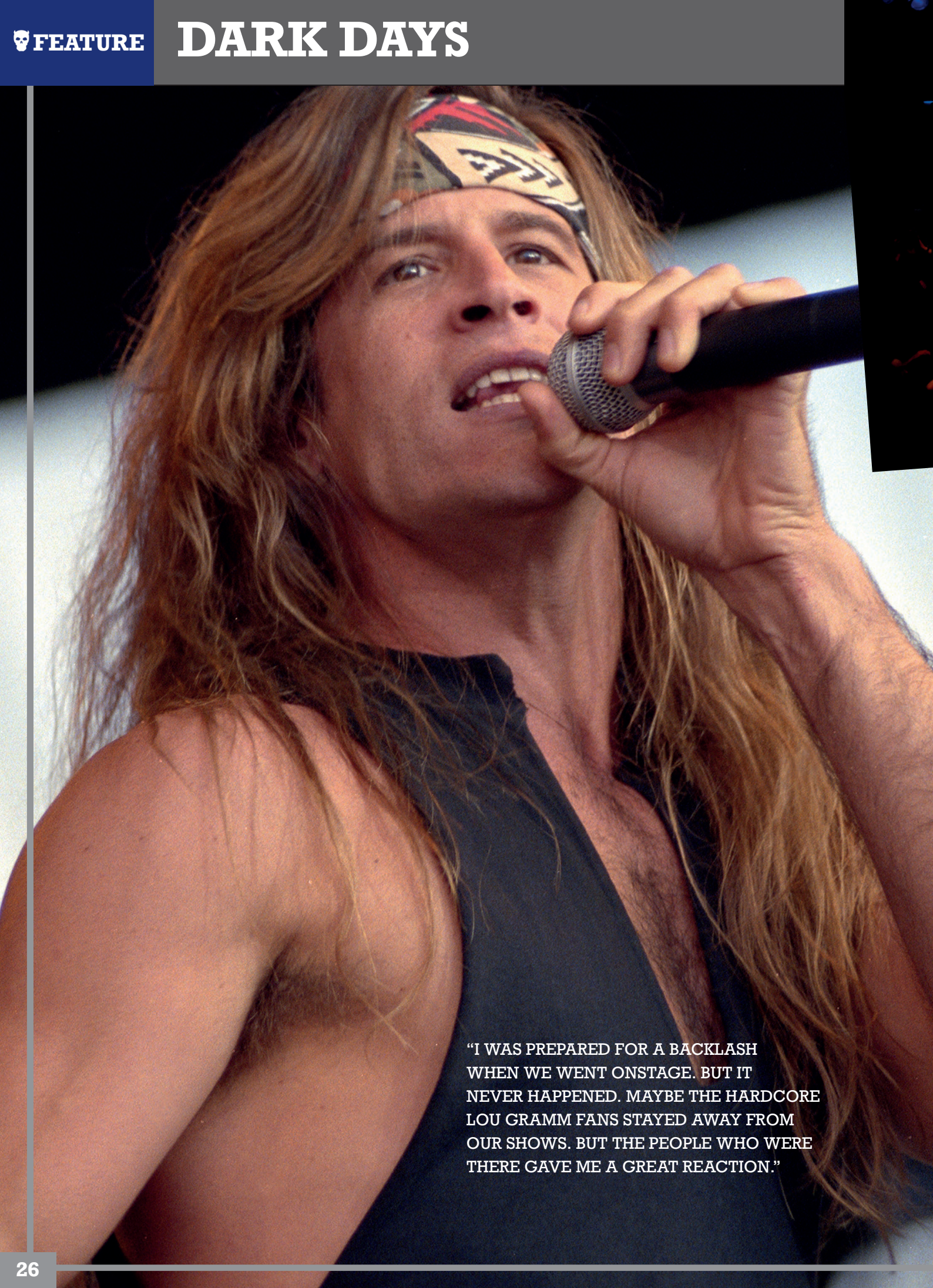
Drummer Dennis Elliott was not happy with this idea.

"For some reason I was asked to talk to Dennis and explain that we were going to be travelling on a bus from now on, and that there'd only be room for the band, nobody else. I told him we'd be on a bus rather than a plane and at first he said, 'OK, I'm in.' Then I added that nobody else but the band would be able to travel on the bus, at which point he said, 'OK, I'm out.' He and his wife went everywhere together, so rather than accepting that his wife would no longer be with him on the road, Dennis left the band right there and then in November of '91. We had to get Larry Aberman in to finish the tour."

THERE WAS just the one gig in England, at the Marquee Club in London. For a band used to

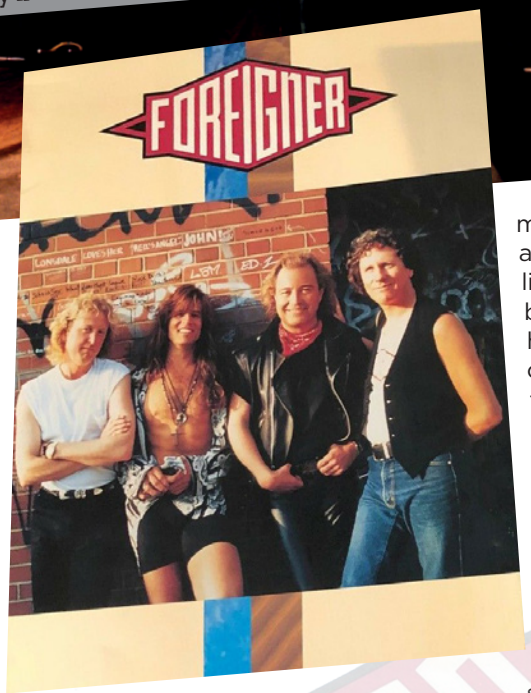
Photos: Getty Images/Tim Mosenfelder; Alamy/DPA Picture Alliance

DARK DAYS



"I WAS PREPARED FOR A BACKLASH WHEN WE WENT ONSTAGE. BUT IT NEVER HAPPENED. MAYBE THE HARDCORE LOU GRAMM FANS STAYED AWAY FROM OUR SHOWS. BUT THE PEOPLE WHO WERE THERE GAVE ME A GREAT REACTION."

Johnny live on stage with Mick Jones (left) and bassist Rick Wills



headlining Wembley Arena that was some comedown. And while the reaction from the crowd on the night was positive, Edwards doesn't recall the gig with any great enthusiasm.

"I was sick that night, so didn't deliver as I'd hoped," he says. "I was ill for a few dates on the tour and feel I let everyone down."

To his surprise, though, Foreigner's fans were kinder to him than he'd expected.

"I was prepared for a backlash when we went onstage," he admits. "But it never happened. Maybe the hardcore Lou Gramm fans stayed away from our shows. But the people who were there gave me a great reaction. It filled me with hope that we could turn things around with a second album together.

"Mick had moved from New York to LA, where I was still living. I set up a recording rig in a rehearsal space and the two of us started to work on songs for the next album. We even brought in outside writers to collaborate with us and contacted publishers to see what other appropriate songs they might have available. We spent a few months doing things this way, but then Mick started not turning up. He called a couple of times and arranged for us to meet up at 10am the next day. I'd be there, but there was no sign of him. Then the calls stopped and I never heard anything from Mick for a week. Eventually he got back in contact and told me that Lou Gramm was back in and that I was out. It was a simple as that.

"I appreciate why they got Lou back, but at the time I'd just bought a house in LA. I wish I'd known it was in Mick's mind to bring Lou back before I'd taken out the loan for that property! But it obviously made sense for the band to return to the Jones/Gramm partnership. It was what had given Foreigner so much success. Neither Mick nor Lou had done as well on their own. What was a shame was the fact that Atlantic had been really excited when they first heard the demos for the new songs Mick and I had been working on. The president of the company, Ahmet Ertegun, loved what we were doing."

Perhaps ironically Atlantic and Foreigner parted company when Gramm came back into the fold.

"I can't say I was surprised, though," says Edwards. "I have no right to speculate on the relationship between Lou and Mick, but it was well known that it came with a lot of baggage. I don't think the label was prepared to put up with that dynamic again."

IN 1994 Foreigner released the 'Mr Moonlight' album on Arista. But even though it saw the iconic Jones/Gramm alliance back in harness, the album actually did a lot worse than 'Unusual Heat', only making it to number 136 in the States and number 59 in the UK. The band limped on until 2003, when Gramm bailed again as a result of significant health problems and another cooling of relations with Jones. Kelly Hansen, the singer who'd been in the frame to replace Gramm first time around, came in two years later and has been successfully fronting Foreigner ever since. 2009's 'Can't Slow Down' – the band's last studio album to date – broke into the US Top 30, peaking at number 29.

Foreigner still remain a strong live draw, but as far as I'm concerned sticking with Edwards for a second album could have heralded a fresh and dynamic era. I believe that 'Unusual Heat' is still the best Foreigner album since '4'.

"I think people now listen to it with more sympathetic ears than in 1991," says Edwards. "The songs are good, the performances are strong and the production is powerful. It's representative of a classic rock style that was out of step with the times back then, but it gets a lot more respect today. I'm proud of what we did."

EDWARDS NOW fronts Louisville band Bleu Phonque while also working as a manager at a communications company. But he's grateful for the opportunity he had to be in Foreigner.

"I got to live a lifestyle that I could only dream of before," he laughs. "And through Mick I met some amazing people. He knew everyone. I sat and chatted with Mick Jagger, George Harrison, Paul McCartney, Billy Joel, Christie Brinkley, and plenty of others. Thinking back, it was almost surreal.

"To be honest there's a still part of me that feels I should have stuck to my guns, followed my instincts, and turned down the chance to join Foreigner. Who knows what would have happened with Wild Horses? But if I'd done that I'd have missed out on so much stuff that really changed my life. Yes, I may forever be known as the singer who took over from Lou Gramm – briefly! But I don't care. I don't know if I'd make the same choice again, but that's what life threw at me – and I certainly enjoyed it!"

Photos: Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns; Getty Images/Tim Mosenfelde

So Near...

... and yet so far. Everyone agrees that **Armored Saint** should have been massive, right up there with Metallica. But somehow it didn't happen. *Howard Johnson* talks with frontman **John Bush** and bassist/producer **Joey Vera** about how that feels, and why they still *need* to make music...

YOU'D HAVE THOUGHT THAT John Bush would have better things to do on the day of his 57th birthday than sit down for a Zoom interview with me. But I guess it shows the passion the vocalist has for his band, Armored Saint, that he's prepared to shoo the wife out of the family living room at 10 in the morning to spend an hour and a half – alongside bassist Joey Vera – discussing the 38-year career of the Los Angeles act that could rightly be dubbed 'The Unluckiest Metal Band In The World'. It must be frustrating that every time your band is mentioned thoughts and questions turn to what *might* have been, especially when you're still an active outfit.

But that's what fate has handed to Armored Saint, the not-quite-thrash band that everyone loved, and that left people scratching their heads trying to figure out why they never became absolutely massive.

Once you've heard the band's latest album, 'Punching The Sky', you'll be scratching your head even more. The eighth studio effort from the band that has kept the same line-up since 1989 – with the awful exception of the loss of guitarist Dave Pritchard to leukaemia in 1990 – shows Armored Saint at the top of their game. The sound is modern and contemporary, the songs heavy yet naggingly catchy. Put it this way. If Metallica had released

Armored Saint photographed in Chicago, 9 February 1985. L-R: Joey Vera (bass), Gonzo Sandoval (drums), Dave Pritchard (guitar), Phil Sandoval (guitar), John Bush (vocals)

Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

'Punching The Sky' everyone and his dog would be hailing numbers like 'End Of The Attention Span' and 'Fly In The Ointment' as modern-day masterpieces.

"The problem was that back in the '80s we didn't fit in with either the hair metal or the thrash scenes that were prevalent at the time," says John with the slightest roll of the eyes. "To a certain extent we had the look of an '80s LA band, but we were much heavier than groups like RATT and Great White. We definitely felt kinship with the thrashers. We were buddies with Metallica and did a couple of tours with them. We related to that 'f*ck you' attitude they had and we weren't standing in front of the mirror thinking, 'Is our hair in place?' But really we followed our own path. We were more of a metal band in the traditional sense. Our influences were from the '70s – UFO, Scorpions, Thin Lizzy, Priest, Sabbath, Zep, Queen, Kiss... Then in the '80s we got swept up with Maiden and Motörhead and Saxon. We wanted to be heavy and powerful, but we also wanted to write songs that were slow and had crescendos, songs that could have been inspired by 'Freebird'. We played with bands from both sides of the divide, but we didn't easily fit into either mould."

BACK IN 1984 I'd flown from the UK to Los Angeles in my role as a *Kerrang!* journalist. I interviewed Armored Saint at the offices of Chrysalis Records, the major label that had just signed them after an EP, 'Armored Saint', had caused a stir on the independent Metal Blade label. At the time I was struck by the fact that this felt like a group that had more in common with the aesthetics of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal scene than the 'party and chicks' thing that was all over LA at the time.

"We were so into the NWOBHM," says Joey. "And to have you, a writer from *Kerrang!*, come all the way to the US to interview us... Wow! And I'll never forget a quote you put in that original article you wrote in *Kerrang!* You said, 'These guys have more to do with the mud

ARMORED SAINT

at Donington then the hairspray in LA.' We were like, 'Yes! We're f*cking *justified*!' I also remember that you said you were impressed by the fact that I was wearing a Metal Blade T-shirt in the offices of our new record company!"

Almost four decades later it feels slightly surreal to be interviewing these same guys again, knowing that they've remained close through thick and thin. Or thin and thin...

"John, [drummer] Gonzo [Sandoval] and I first met way back in third grade," explains Joey. "And Gonzo's younger brother Phil [who would eventually become an Armored Saint guitarist] was always hanging around too, before becoming a musician was ever a thought. But I guess we got really close when we went into middle school. John and I had a band called Rhapsody when we were 14 and that's when we started to have dreams of being on stage and wanting a career in music – with no understanding at all of what it really meant. To my mind the music has always been a positive in keeping our friendships going. It hasn't been an easy ride. There were many things that were challenging and there still are. It's difficult to be in a band, period, let alone with people you're so close to, and sometimes I think the *only* thing that's kept us together is the music. We don't live close to each other any more. LA's a big city and [guitarist] Jeff [Duncan, who joined the band in 1989], is in Las Vegas. So I often don't see or talk to the guys for a long time. But it's about the music, and we take pride in having kept the same people."

"THE TRUTH IS THAT I DON'T FEEL WE EVER THOUGHT WE WERE 100 PER CENT A PART OF THAT THRASH THING. WE DIDN'T THINK THAT WAS OUR TRIBE. THOSE GUYS PLAYED BY A CERTAIN SET OF RULES THAT DIDN'T NECESSARILY JIVE WITH US."
JOEY VERA

I WONDER what the emotional impact has been on the individual band members to have been so close to the big four of thrash – Metallica, Megadeth, Slayer, and Anthrax – and to have been constantly praised as being every bit as good as those bands, yet to have missed out on the big successes those groups enjoyed.

"Believe it or not I don't think we ever had an internal conversation about that," says Joey. "It's strange when people say to me, 'You should have been bigger.' But I say the exact same thing about Thin Lizzy. There are just reasons why things happen. The truth is that I don't feel we ever thought we were 100 per cent a part of that thrash thing. We didn't think that was our tribe. Those guys played by a certain set of rules that didn't necessarily jive with us. We had a couple of thrashy songs, because we were inspired by Motörhead, but that wasn't *all* we wanted to do. Our songs had more variety. We could do a tune with a bluesy shuffle and you'd never hear that on a record by Testament, Exodus or Anthrax. We wanted to do a lot more, so it never felt like we were getting left behind, because we didn't see ourselves as being part of that thing. Of course we aspired to play arenas, but stumbling blocks kept getting in the way."

"I certainly think there was an element of jealousy within the ranks of Armored Saint about the success The Big Four had," says John candidly. "But we probably felt the same about the success of W.A.S.P. and RATT. For me the one huge mistake we made in our career, the one thing that could have changed everything, was the fact that we never made it to the UK early enough. Our first record [the 'Armored Saint' EP] came out in 1983. The first time we did a UK show was 1991. We put out three albums with Chrysalis between '84 and '87 and we never set foot in Britain. For me that was a big factor."

DESPITE THE fact that the size of the US metal market in the mid- to late-'80s dwarfed the UK, Bush's opinion still carries some weight. Britain was regarded as a metal tastemaker market, probably because it was generally accepted as the place where metal started.

Photos: IconicPix/David Plastik

Plus the emergence of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal at the end of the '70s had focused worldwide attention on the country once more, particularly because many of the newer American acts were obsessed by that movement. There was a reason why Metallica, Anthrax, Metallica, and Slayer were all regular faces on the UK circuit early on in their careers. If you could establish your cred over there you could then go back to the States with extra kudos.

"We were all over the European mags," continues John. "The press over there really loved us, but we never played. And while it doesn't keep me awake at night, for me that's the one big regret."

What makes the lack of UK activity even more surprising was the fact that at the time Armored Saint were managed by Q Prime, the same company that had meticulously plotted Metallica's rise from left-field weirdos to mainstream metal gods. Surely they knew how important the UK was to an outsider rock band's upward trajectory...

"Chrysalis were never willing to pay tour support for us to go over there," says Bush. "And Q Prime didn't force them. It just seemed like an obvious play for the management to get us over to Europe supporting Metallica, but they told us it cost too much money and that we should focus on America. I was like, 'But *they're* going, and *they're* going...' We didn't, and it's the most moronic thing ever."

"Hindsight is 20/20, of course," Joey chips in. "But I do wonder why we weren't more insistent on *making* the management and label get us over there. We really wanted to do it, but we just rolled over. I don't remember fighting with them and *insisting*, so I can't blame them 100 per cent. We were there in the same room and we allowed it to happen. We could have put our foot down."

"Obviously we didn't have the balls to go against these people and throw that stuff down," says John. "We were probably intimidated by [Q Prime bosses] Cliff [Burnstein] and Peter [Mensch]. Peter had a reputation, but he was in Europe so we had more contact with Cliff. But Cliff could be an intimidating guy as well. I'm not harbouring some major grudge, but that was an area that will never sit well with us. I think we could have had a bigger career in Europe. We would have had a bigger record company debt, but who cares whether it was half a million or a million? The important thing is that I think our story would have been different."

"IT'S THE THING I'LL GET ASKED ABOUT UNTIL THE DAY I DIE: 'JOHN BUSH. THE MAN WHO TURNED METALLICA DOWN.' THE TRUTH IS, IT JUST WASN'T MY FATE, IT WASN'T THE ROAD I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO ON. BUT WHAT I ALSO THINK IS THAT IT WASN'T THE ROAD METAL MUSIC IN GENERAL WAS SUPPOSED TO GO DOWN EITHER."
JOHN BUSH

OF COURSE, everyone knows that John Bush's personal story could have been radically different had he accepted an offer to join the fledgling Metallica in 1983 at a time when James Hetfield was unsure whether he wanted to front the band or simply play guitar.

"I don't really think about it until people like you bring it up," Bush laughs. "It's the thing I'll get asked about until the day I die: 'John Bush. The Man Who Turned Metallica Down.' The truth is, it just wasn't my fate, it wasn't the road I was supposed to go on. But what I also think is that it wasn't the road metal music in general was supposed to go down either. If my voice had been the voice of that band, then Metallica may or may not have had the same success, but it would definitely have changed Metallica massively. James is that band's frontman and James is that band's voice. He was meant to lead it, not me.

"Of course I'm flattered that I was asked," continues Bush. "And when Metallica asked me to perform with them [at the Fillmore in San Francisco singing 'The Four Horsemen'] in 2011 it was an amazing experience and provided a snapshot of what it would have sounded like. But that's all it was. I'm grateful they asked me and I have the utmost respect for them becoming the biggest rock band in the world. It just wasn't for me to be there."

Who will ever know for sure? But what is certain is that Armored Saint's momentum slowed after the ►

ARMORED SAINT

AS guitarist Dave Pritchard, who sadly lost his battle with leukaemia in 1990

third Chrysalis album, 1987's 'Raising Fear', and the label duly dropped the band. Despite going back to Metal Blade for a live album, 1988's inappropriately titled 'Saints Will Conquer', it was clear that the wheels were coming off. While recording demos for another proposed studio album Dave Pritchard was diagnosed with leukaemia and passed away in February of 1990. It felt like a particularly cruel blow at what was already a very difficult time. With former Odin guitarist Jeff Duncan recruited, the band recorded the 'Symbol Of Salvation' album with respected producer Dave Jerden. But when it was released on Metal Blade on 14 May 1991 grunge had already begun to take a hold and like many acts that were associated with 'old' metal Armored Saint took a real commercial beating.

"'Symbol Of Salvation' received great critical acclaim," says Joey. "But a year later the record had stalled. We had to write a new album – and we just didn't think we had the strength to do it."

AND THAT was when another of The Big Four, this time Anthrax, came knocking at John Bush's door. After firing vocalist Joey Belladonna in late 1992, Anthrax manager Jonny Z was quick to pick up the phone to a man whose vocal prowess in the world of metal had never been in question.

"And at first I said no," says Bush. "Why? Because I still had this real dysfunctional commitment to Armored Saint. I felt that I'd be abandoning my friends if I took the Anthrax gig. But Jonny called me back, sent me some music, and told me I needed to reconsider. I did then think, 'Wait a minute. What am I doing?' I'm not trying to paint my dedication to Armored Saint as some sort of crazy, unyielding love, though there's definitely *some* of that. But leaving somehow felt like breaking the code. It was hard."

"At the end of the 'Symbol Of Salvation' cycle we were exasperated," says Joey. "Things just weren't going our way, so when John came and announced he was going to be leaving, to me it was almost a relief. We needed a break anyway, so in some ways it was perfect timing. It was definitely easier for me to swallow John's departure than it was for some of the other guys in the band. Privately I told John that there would be no bad blood between me and him, and that if he didn't take the opportunity he'd look back in later life and maybe have some resentment toward me. I didn't want that. I supported John's choice."

Bush's departure was the catalyst for Armored Saint disbanding in 1992 and the group remained inactive until 1999.

"It was a weird time," admits Vera. "I suddenly didn't have the support network of the band I'd been in for the last 10 years, but I actually found that very refreshing. I wrote a bunch of music on my own, played with other people, joined a couple of covers bands. Stopping Armored Saint didn't make much difference to me financially, because I wasn't making any money from music anyway. I'd recently got married and was starting a new life there too, so my mind was OK with everything."

"And playing with Anthrax was an amazing experience for me," says John. "Working with another bunch of fabulous musicians was awesome. If you're a musician it's an important part of your development to play with different people. That experience embellished me as an artist. It catapulted me into a whole different mindset that was very necessary. I got a different perspective, and Joey did the same when he joined Fates Warning."

Photos: IconicPix/PG Brunelli; Travis Shinn

AS 2020 vintage, L-R: Phil Sandoval, Jeff Duncan, John Bush, Gonzo Sandoval, Joey Vera

STILL, THE emotional pull of Armored Saint and the bonds of friendship the band members have had since they were young kids eventually drew everyone back to the same place. In 1999 John and Joey put the band back together and they're still at it today, with a further five studio albums added to the canon, all of them released on Metal Blade. They're clearly in it for the love and the art, not the money.

"We *never* made money," confirms John. "We've done some tours recently where we actually came home with some cash, but there's never been a nest egg. So we really are doing it for the love of it."

Both guys are lucky to have understanding wives, who both also happen to have the financial means to allow their partners to keep playing.

"My wife began a commercial casting business a long time ago that's still going," explains John. "It's struggling a little with the global pandemic right now, which is slightly worrying, but that's been my family's primary source of income since we were first married almost 20 years ago now. My royalties just kind of supplement stuff. If I had to support my family through Armored Saint income, I'd have to be on the road for eight months a year. I don't know if we could do that – or even if I'd *want* to do that."

"If I were single and Armored Saint was my only source of income then I wouldn't be here right now," says Joey.

"My wife is the president of Metal Blade Records – handy, huh? – and we've been married for 28 years. Without her it would be extremely difficult to do what I do. We're a team in this house. When I'm not on the road I'm 100 per cent a stay-at-home dad, and I do it totally willingly, because I love my family and I love my life."

> "WE *NEVER* MADE MONEY. WE'VE DONE SOME TOURS RECENTLY WHERE WE ACTUALLY CAME HOME WITH SOME CASH, BUT THERE'S NEVER BEEN A NEST EGG. SO WE REALLY ARE DOING IT FOR THE LOVE OF IT."
> **JOHN BUSH**

Right now Bush and Vera are delighted that 'Punching The Sky' is gaining so many plaudits. I'd say it's because it sounds like an album that comes from the heart. But in an industry that's so radically different to the one they first entered back in '82, and where making money out of new music is increasingly problematic, how do Armored Saint manage to justify the effort that goes into creating it?

"I guess it's kind of selfish to think about things this way," says Vera. "But really, we do it for ourselves. John and I love working together and we still find it very stimulating and fulfilling. *We* need to do it. Whether society needs Armored Saint or not in 2020 is debatable. But what I have noticed is that lockdown seems to have made people appreciate some of the things they've had taken away from them that little bit more. People feel starved of music from the bands that they follow. I know that Armored Saint fans have found this new music we've made to be some sort of a blessing, and if we can touch people like that, then that's a blessing for us too."

OVERLOOKED

Little Caesar came out of nowhere at the end of the '80s and looked all set for major success. But an unsympathetic album production and frontman **Ron Young**'s decision to speak out against his own record company put paid to all that. *Dave Reynolds* catches up with Young to find out what went wrong, and how in spite of all that the band are still rocking today...

LIKE MANY PEOPLE OF his generation, Little Caesar vocalist Ron Young's love affair with rock music began in 1973 when at the age of just 13 his mind was well and truly blown by Led Zeppelin at a concert at Madison Square Garden in Young's native New York City. But having committed to the rock'n'roll life the aspirant singer endured plenty of struggles in bands that went nowhere. Things only really started happening when Ron quit New York and headed west to Los Angeles in 1985 when he was 25 years old.

"The rock scene in New York City was dying at that time – it was all dance and hip hop – and things were happening for rock bands in LA," he explains. "I decided I stood a better chance of getting something going out there, but needed work when I first arrived. I've got something of a 'f*ck you' attitude, so I figured that might be an asset in the world of nightclub door work. I worked in clubs at night, became a motorcycle dispatch rider by day and then started to put a band together."

WAS L.A. EVERYTHING YOU HOPED IT WOULD BE WHEN YOU ARRIVED?

"Not exactly. The rock that was happening there was this pop metal stuff. I'd grown up listening to soul and blues-based music, and I was pretty sure I couldn't look like a woman, so I wasn't the typical thing. I wanted to find like-minded guys into the same kind of music and approach as me, guys who wanted to put a band together doing hard rock versions of old soul-type songs."

WHAT FIRST STEPS DID YOU TAKE TO MAKE THAT DREAM A REALITY?

"In '86 I put a band together called Smiling Jacks with a drummer named Tom Morris. It wasn't very focused,

THE RISE AND FALL OF CAESAR!

so it faded out quickly. But then I met Loren Molinare, a guitarist who was friends with a bassist called Fidel Paniagua. I was working the door at a place called Club Lingerie and some people there told me about a guy who went by the name of Apache [AKA Jimmy Hayne]. We got hold of him and it turned out that he was a really good, tasteful, bluesy guitar player. We started jamming, it felt really good, we wrote a bunch of songs and also threw in a bunch of covers. I took the band name from the title of a 1930s gangster movie called *Little Caesar*. I thought that Caesar was tough, but the Little would keep us humble.

"We promoted our gigs with flyers just like everybody else did back then, and right from our first show we started getting traction. People might have been scratching their heads a little bit, but we stood out from the pack and got a lot of attention. The second show we ever did led to [well-regarded record executive] Jimmy Iovine getting involved on the management side. Before we knew it he had us down at A&M studios cutting some demos. Then all of a sudden it was an A&R fest at our shows and in 1988 we ended up being signed by John Kalodner for Geffen's DGC imprint. I think it was the largest record deal that had ever been given to a new band at that time."

DID YOU THINK THE BIG-TIME HAD ARRIVED WHEN YOU SIGNED WITH GEFFEN?

"We were all really excited, but apprehensive too, because when you get in there with all the big guys it's like standing in the ocean with big waves coming over you. They can knock you down. But it all looked great at first."

YOUR RAPID RISE MUST HAVE PISSED OFF ALL THOSE HAIR METAL BANDS THAT WERE ROAMING L.A. AT THE TIME...

"We'd gained a lot of street credibility for just being who we were. We weren't your typical Sunset Strip band, dressing like rock stars and hiring a tour bus to go play a club. We were a bit different, which meant that we could go and play on the east side of Hollywood with edgier bands like Junkyard and Rhino Bucket, even some punk rock bands. And then we could also play at a hair metal place like Gazzarri's. We didn't fit into any particular scene so we played with all kinds of bands, from George Thorogood to Jane's Addiction. It worked out pretty well, because we were playing to audiences that had grown tired of the teased hair and the pop metal thing. They wanted something a bit grittier. So those people gravitated towards us."

> "WE WERE PLAYING TO AUDIENCES THAT HAD GROWN TIRED OF THE TEASED HAIR AND THE POP METAL THING. THEY WANTED SOMETHING GRITTIER. THOSE PEOPLE GRAVITATED TOWARDS US."

DESPITE HAVING A MAJOR DEAL THE FIRST THING YOU RELEASED WAS THE SONG 'DOWN TO THE WIRE' ON A 1989 INDEPENDENT COMPILATION ALBUM CALLED 'STREET SURVIVORS'. HOW DID THAT COME ABOUT?

"The Metal Blade label put that compilation out, but to be honest the whole thing was very contrived. Geffen had had some success with Guns N' Roses and the 'Live ?!*@ Like A Suicide' EP that had initially been released on an independent label. We were all set to start recording our album with [producer] Bob Rock, but John Kalodner had a bust up with him just as we were about to start. He went off to do other things and in the end we had to wait about a year and a half for things to get smoothed out and for Bob to be free of his other commitments before we could finally begin working together. Rather than have us sit around doing nothing Geffen came up with the idea of taking some songs that weren't going to appear on the debut album and pressing them up as an EP for release on Metal Blade to establish some street cred. It ended up being so great working with [Metal Blade owner] Brian Slagel that when we finally started working with Geffen we immediately felt like we wanted to go back to Metal Blade!"

METAL BLADE ALSO PUT OUT AN EP CALLED 'NAME YOUR POISON' IN 1989. THE COVER OF A RIPPED CONDOM WRAPPER CAUSED A BIT OF A STIR...

"My sister Sandi designed it. She was an art director at Atlantic Records and had worked on things like Foreigner's 'Head Games' album cover, which was controversial in itself. We were just trying to be a little edgy and clever with the EP."

Photo: IconicPix/David Plastik

OVERLOOKED

Little Caesar photographed in 1992. L-R: Loren Molinare (guitar), Fidel Paniagua (bass), Ron Young (vocals), Earl Slick (guitar), Tom Morris (drums)

WHAT WERE YOU AIMING FOR WHEN YOU WERE FINALLY READY TO GET STARTED ON YOUR DEBUT ALBUM WITH BOB ROCK?

"Well we definitely didn't want to make a hair metal record. We wanted our album to have a '70s feel, something that would make you feel like if you closed your eyes you were listening to a band in a club. Bob was Kalodner's choice, but when we met him and told him about our vision he was really excited. He said he'd love to make a record like that. We went up to Vancouver to record for six months and at first there was this really warm, natural ambience to the sounds. But just as we were finishing off the basic tracks the Mötley Crüe album 'Dr. Feelgood', a record that Bob had also produced, went to number one. All of a sudden Bob wanted to add more guitar parts and what have you. He'd realised that Bob Rock had become a brand. Suddenly making the record we'd originally discussed became something that was outside of his wheelhouse, and now Bob didn't want to do that. Unfortunately John Kalodner agreed with him. Kalodner thought we should be competing with Winger and Warrant and from that point on everything about the record became a battle. All of the personality got taken out of it."

> "GEFFEN SOLD THE LABEL AND THE METHOD OF DISTRIBUTION CHANGED. FOR A TIME OUR RECORD WASN'T EVEN GETTING TO THE STORES. THEN THE NEW LABEL OWNERS STARTED CUTTING BUDGETS. I GOT ANGRY AND TALKED VERY SPECIFICALLY ABOUT THESE BUSINESS PROBLEMS IN THE PRESS. I SPOKE OUT OF TURN AND THAT MADE SOME PEOPLE VERY ANGRY. IT WASN'T A VERY TACTICAL MOVE ON MY PART AND BECAUSE OF THAT THE LABEL TOLD US THEY WERE DONE WITH US."

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO COVER THE ARETHA FRANKLIN SOUL CLASSIC 'CHAIN OF FOOLS'?

"That was the first track I sang for the album, even though I didn't want it on the record. And I certainly didn't want it to be the first single! It was just something we'd started jamming on in rehearsals and the song kinda followed us out of there. It's a great tune, but Aretha's voice had a lot to do with it. Our version was good [and it reached number 88 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart], but I felt we needed to go with an original. John Kalodner's logic was

that Van Halen had done well with cover tunes so... And at that time you couldn't fight with John Kalodner."

THE DEBUT ALBUM, 'LITTLE CAESAR', WAS FINALLY RELEASED IN 1990...

"And we sold about 180,000 copies in the first six weeks, and started getting added to radio and MTV. But then [owner] David Geffen sold the label and the method of distribution changed. For a time our record wasn't even getting to the stores. Then the new label owners started cutting budgets. I got angry and talked very specifically about these business problems in the press. I spoke out of turn and that made some people very angry. It wasn't a very tactical move on my part and because of that the label told us they were done with us. We also split with Jimmy Iovine, but managed to hire Herbie Herbert, who also managed Journey. Herbie met with the company to try to heal the relationship, but it didn't make any difference. Geffen gave up on the first record and although we recorded a second album for the label [1992's 'Influence'] that was Geffen just fulfilling the terms of the contract before they buried us."

APACHE LEFT THE BAND BEFORE THAT RECORD AND WAS REPLACED BY VETERAN GUITARIST EARL SLICK...

"Apache left right after our tour with Kiss in the summer of 1990. He was really angry about all the business bullsh*t surrounding the band. Loren knew Slick and told us that his band Dirty White Boy had just split. He came down to jam and fit right in. He was a great guy."

NEITHER JOHN KALODNER NOR BOB ROCK WAS INVOLVED IN THAT SECOND ALBUM. WHY?

"We refused to work with them, and of course that didn't help us politically with Geffen either. There were some good songs on that album, but we really weren't in the right mental state to make it. Howard Benson, a producer who was on the way up, worked on it and the record was made very quickly. We were burnt and angry and the album felt like having a kid to save a marriage."

WAS IT INEVITABLE THAT THE BAND WOULD SPLIT AFTER 'INFLUENCE'?

"We came over to the UK to play the Marquee club in London in '92 and that was really exciting for us. But we knew it was all over when the label refused to give us any tour support to come back to Europe to play some dates we'd been offered opening for Thunder. It was impossible to be creative in the situation we found ourselves in. Plus it didn't help that I turned into a heroin addict for seven years! That took me out of commission for a time."

HOLD ON A SECOND. YOU HAD A *SEVEN-YEAR* HEROIN ADDICTION?

"I'd been a recreational user for years, but the stress of what happened to the band definitely accelerated my addiction. Beforehand my drug of choice had always been music, so when I felt that I wasn't going to get to make music anymore I found the substance – heroin – that made me numb to all that was happening and I went with it. I was arrogant and ignorant enough to believe that other people became junkies and that that would never happen to me. But heroin is highly addictive. Once it got under my skin I couldn't get rid of it! But I don't blame my addiction entirely on the situation with Geffen. It's always very convenient to blame something or somebody else to justify your own indiscretions."

SO HOW DID YOUR DRUG USE AFFECT YOU AND THE BAND?

"The band had already split up by then, but it was a living hell for me. It was like feeding a beast. It was an incredible burden emotionally, physically, and financially. Little Caesar had ended, but the people in the band were all still close friends. I kept it hidden from the guys, because I was embarrassed and ashamed. My addiction made me go underground and avoid them, because I didn't want them to see me in that condition. Thank God I came out the other side"

NOW YOU HAVE A CLEAR MIND AGAIN, HOW DO YOU LOOK BACK ON THE GEFFEN YEARS?

"We were a soul and R&B-based hard rock band. We never broke new ground. We just paid homage to our influences. But if we'd come out in the '70s and done exactly what we wanted to do with a Tom Dowd or an Andy Johns producing you would have heard more space and personality in those two records. My main regret is that we should've fought harder to record what we wanted. At least that way we could look back and feel satisfied with what we produced. It took me a long time to realise that being a commercial success and being a creative success are two different things. I thought record sales interpreted the value of your art. They don't."

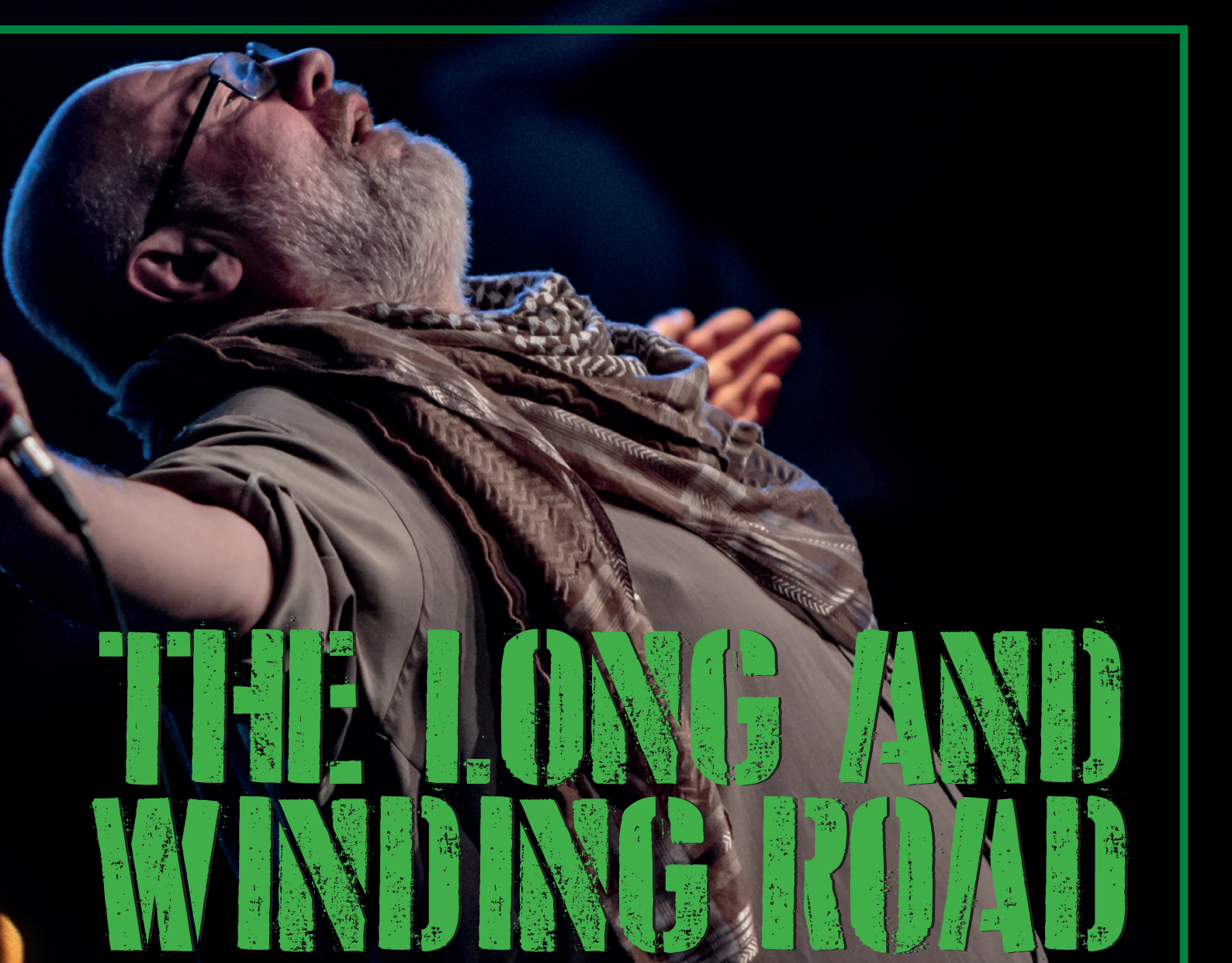
WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO REFORM THE BAND IN 2001 AND WHAT'S KEPT YOU MOTIVATED SINCE?

"The Internet made us realise how many fans we had. And if we didn't look on the band as a commercial venture and we just did it for the music, then we could do everything exactly the way we wanted to do it. By 2001 there were ways to sell directly to fans, so that's what we did. We felt that if we treated our fans with respect and made credible music then we could keep it going – and that's what we've done. There's nothing in this world that gives me the same sensation I get when I put a melody together and get in front of a microphone. It's about playing with these guys I've been friends with for over 30 years, and about connecting with our fans. It's such a rewarding and rich experience to do this still.

"At the moment we're trying to survive the pandemic and at the end of it we hope there's something left. We had a bunch of European dates lined up, but they've all been moved to 2021. I'm keeping my fingers crossed we get to do them."

Photo: Getty Images/Ron Galella Collection

FISH



THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

As **Fish** releases what he assures us is his last album, 'Weltschmerz', *Jon Hotten* hooks up with the former Marillion frontman to discuss a mighty recording career spanning fully 37 years that has featured a huge number of highs and lows, both musical and personal...

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1989, sitting on a plane about to go to Edinburgh in Scotland, EMI's head of press Brian Munns handed me a tape. It was titled 'Vigil In A Wilderness Of Mirrors', and it was the debut solo album by Fish. I slid it into the player and sat back. I'd already heard the first single 'State Of Mind', a slow-burn song with a jittery, paranoid lyric that seemed to fit with the times of its creator. It's a long time ago now but I remember that short flight, the wash of melodies from the tape back-noted by engine noise, a mad dash from the airport to the Edinburgh Playhouse to see those songs played live for the first time, and the following day a trip to the farmhouse outside of the city that Fish had bought after selling his place in Gerrards Cross, some 20 miles outside London.

He's sitting in that same farmhouse near Edinburgh when he picks up the phone to me some three decades later, at the tail end of a long, long journey, both musical and personal. "I'm 62 now," he says, as if he can't quite believe it himself, "and with [new album] 'Weltschmerz' I'm closing the circle. 'Vigil...' was a really important record for me, and I didn't want to end with something that wasn't the best record I could possibly make."

Weltschmerz is a German concept that translates literally as 'world pain'. It's also a very Fish concept. He's always been a raw nerve in the wind. Even when he was living it large with the money and the fame, the booze and the drugs, he produced 'Clutching At Straws', his final and best album with Marillion, one that contained the mocking self-disgust of 'Incommunicado' and the self-lacerating 'Sugar Mice'.

Now he's older, somewhat wiser, more measured. He has 11 solo studio albums to his name and feels, with some justification, that his last is the best since his first. He begins his story with an ending, that of his split with Marillion in 1988. He'd written the band a letter that contained an ultimatum: either the manager John Arnison went, or he would. Soon afterwards he did, the relationship with his bandmates as well as their manager frayed beyond repair. EMI retained the contracts of both singer and band, a short-lived arrangement that had some entirely foreseeable consequences.

"The two big things for me were leaving Marillion and being written off," he says. "When I left the band I was caught in the internal politics at EMI to some degree, and on top of that there were stories being generated

Photos: Getty Images/Paul Natkin; Getty Images/Sergione Infuso/Corbis

With Marillion – and a lot of make-up – in 1983. L-R: Pete Trewavas (bass), Mark Kelly (keyboards), Fish (vocals), Steve Rothery (guitar), Mick Pointer (drums)

that were throwing a very negative slant on me: 'It's drink and drugs...' which was f*cking b*llocks. You know, 'The other guys are the musicians, they're the band... too many cancelled shows... He's a waster...' That propelled me and gave me a lot of energy to really prove myself."

Fish found himself a new writing partner called Mickey Simmonds, a renowned session keyboard player who'd worked with Mike Oldfield and Neil Innes.

"Working with another writer and a different box of tools was exciting," he recalls. "A lot of the material that I had, I'd put forward for the [Marillion] album that never was. I remember going into a garage where the band were kind of writing, I think it was at Pete Trewavas's house. I showed them 'Vigil...' and they didn't like that. They didn't like 'Big Wedge' because it was too political. 'State Of Mind' was at a very early stage. So there were enough bits and pieces left that I could pick up on, and working with Mickey was suddenly a new energy. I wasn't dealing with a committee, I could deal one-on-one with a musician, and it was very inspiring.

"I can remember going into the boardroom at EMI in Manchester Square, London, and you've got all of the execs there. We played them the 'Vigil...' album and at the end everyone was smiling and I felt I'd proved myself as an individual. I'd proved that I could still write great songs. That had been playing on my mind. It was a worry, because in the band I had another four guys to rest on."

FISH'S GENERAL sense of unease at that time wasn't helped by upheaval in his personal life. He took the decision to sell his home and move back north.

"Moving up to Scotland in '89, and having a rehearsal room that ultimately became a studio, was another big thing. I wasn't in good financial shape when I left the band. I was very impetuous, I didn't plan it all out. I just thought 'f*ck it'. I had a huge mortgage and when I left the band my wages just stopped. There were no royalty cheques coming from EMI because we were still in debt to them. I had a theatrical agent in London called Sharon Hamper, and she got me a gig singing a jingle, I think it was for M&Ms. I was doing that just to pick up a couple of hundred quid.

"I didn't want to become the character in the 'Incommunicado' video, the guy at the end of the Marquee bar every night, so I put the house on the market. Part of the reason for me leaving the band was

that my marriage [his first, to Tamara Nowy, who appears in the 'Kayleigh' video] was falling apart. Going back to Scotland made perfect sense, and I'd fallen back in love with the country. One of the things we f*cked up on in Marillion, I realised, was that if we'd bought a rehearsal space with some storage for the gear we would have saved a fortune. I said, 'I need to get a place like a farm with outbuildings,' and my mum and dad found this spot.

"I was able to sell the house in Gerrards Cross and Charisma Music Publishing signed me. They gave me a sh*tload of money and that paid for the recording equipment. At the time I hadn't actually signed the solo deal with EMI, although they paid for the 'Vigil...' sessions at the Townhouse. I paid Mickey and [guitarist] Robin Boult out of the publishing money.

"It was exhilarating, though," he goes on. "I still had my reputation and, delivering the album, I knew I had something in the can. Then EMI shelved it. They wanted the Marillion album [their first with Steve Hogarth, 'Seasons End'] to come out first, and said they'd put mine out in six months. What the f*ck was I supposed to do?

"They were strange times. I didn't have the camaraderie of a band, although that had already disappeared around '87 to be honest, but I had Mickey and I had a team around me. 'Vigil...' is the one album that I don't own the copyright to. I've tried to buy it back, but major labels don't sell copyrights to albums. It's a hugely important album for me."

THROUGHOUT HIS solo years, Fish's art has followed his life. He left EMI after 'Vigil...', the relationship unworkable, and signed to Polydor for 'Internal Exile', a record that reflected the move north (perhaps too much so – it was a case of 'out with the wide boy suits and jester's hat, on with the tam o'shanter') and then an album of cover versions, 'Songs From The Mirror', which proved to be his last record for a major record company. 'Suits' and 'Sunsets On Empire' came from the first of his own labels, Dick Bros, which he then sold to Roadrunner for 'Raingods With Zippos'.

The singer then had a quite serious flirtation with acting, auditioning for a *Rambo* sequel; performing with Adrien Brody, Kris Kristofferson, Jennifer Jason Leigh, and Daniel Craig in *The Jacket*, making appearances in TV dramas *Jute City* and *The Young Person's Guide To Becoming A Rock Star* (playing a character named Derek Trout), all of which he loved and which gave him the same buzz he felt when singing. But the uncertainty of the acting life and the financial implications of cancelling tours to fulfil ever-shifting shooting schedules proved too challenging.

Come the new century Fish had his own label, Chocolate Frog, for 'Fellini Days' ("that record just disappeared"), and then his last three releases, 'Field Of Crows', '13th Star', and 'A Feast Of Consequences'.

There was a six-year gap between 2007's '13th Star' and 2013's 'A Feast Of Consequences' and now seven between 'Feast...' and 'Weltschmerz'. Life intrudes. But these final years have been ones of self-discovery and self-renewal, an acceptance of age and of the life of a musician rather than a rock star.

> "I HAD A HUGE MORTGAGE AND WHEN I LEFT MARILLION MY WAGES JUST STOPPED. THERE WERE NO ROYALTY CHEQUES COMING FROM EMI BECAUSE WE WERE STILL IN DEBT TO THEM. I HAD A THEATRICAL AGENT IN LONDON AND SHE GOT ME A GIG SINGING A JINGLE, I THINK IT WAS FOR M&MS. I WAS DOING THAT JUST TO PICK UP A COUPLE OF HUNDRED QUID."

"I've been doing a lot of radio interviews for the new album and it's, 'oh here's Fish from Marillion...' I'm like, 'Do not write that on my gravestone... with a granite jester's cap', you know? I understand why it was big, but I'm happy with my little lot. I slipped off the radar after 'Internal Exile' back in '91. I've still been working, but people don't know the songs. I don't play the 'poor me' card though. I'm here talking to you as a man who's gone through a number of experiences, some incredibly dark, some incredibly positive, and that's what made me what I am, the difference between the person that you're talking to now and the guy you knew way back when."

FISH IS one of rock'n'roll's most forthcoming interviewees, a man who speaks with a disarming frankness, and inevitably the conversation turns to those dark times, many of which have centred on his physical health and his internal and external emotional struggles.

"Way back on the '13th Star' album, which is the first album where the two of us came together as a writing team, [bassist] Steve Vanstis was sympathetic to my voice," he begins. "I didn't know at the time that I had a problem. That wasn't identified until 2008, nine months after the album, and I was on tour. I'd have one great gig where my voice was wonderful, then I'd have two where there would be very iffy parts and the voice would get very tired. I had one where you could see the people in the front rows wincing.

"On top of that, the Internet had become prevalent and there was a lot of stuff like, 'Oh his voice isn't as good as it was in Marillion,' and that got to me. My confidence really suffered. I got very down about it and I almost walked away after that '13th Star' tour. I wasn't enjoying it. I was rolling the dice every night not knowing what was going to happen.

"Then I went and saw a voice specialist," he continues. "They said I had a growth on my chords. I thought, 'OK this is a payback for all the Benson & Hedges cigarettes and the Jack Daniel's.' I didn't know if

Photo: IconicPix/GEMA Archive

it was cancer and I had to wait about two and a half months for the op. I knew I could be f*cked.

"At the end of 2008, I went in for the operation. I talked to the surgeon afterwards and she said, 'I saw the growth, I touched the chord with a scalpel, and all I can say is, it exploded.' It was a cyst and she thought it had been there for at least two and a half years.

"When I was on the tour I was taking a thousand milligrams of ibuprofen every day, I had prescribed antibiotics, I had steroid injections, all sorts of stuff, and so the cyst was being backed off by all of the drugs. But as I was singing it irritated it more and more. Then I very stupidly got married for the second time – six months that one lasted – and I was in the hospital at the end of December, basically four days before my second wife left me and f*cked off. The same surgeon said she'd removed some excess cell growth where the cyst had been and that I couldn't have that area operated on again as the risk of cancer was too high."

The light only returned when Fish undertook an acoustic tour and re-keyed all of the songs, learning how to sing them in a new way.

"I learned so much about approach and singing on that tour," he says. "That was what gave me the confidence back. I took that into the 'A Feast Of Consequences' album in 2013, and that's why it's so good. Again with 'Weltschmerz,' Steve and I said, 'Well, let's find the real sweet spots of the voice, the places where it's most expressive.' It's the one thing we never did with Marillion. I'm listening to the 'Fugazi' remixes at the moment and I'm going, 'who is that c*nt singing?' I don't recognise my voice from those days. It's like a different person."

> "I'M NOT AN IDIOT, I'M A REALIST. I'M NOT GOING TO BE PLAYING ARENAS ANY TIME SOON. I'M WEARING MYSELF DOWN WHEN I DO TOUR. I DID SIX WEEKS IN EUROPE A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO AND I LOVED EVERY SHOW, BUT THE OTHER 22 HOURS IN THE DAY I F*CKING HATED. 'WHAT AM I DOING THAT FOR?'"

HEAVIER INTIMATIONS of Fish's mortality as both singer and man were still to come. In 2015, two years after 'A Feast Of Consequences', he realised that he probably had just one more record in him.

"When I left Marillion I thought 'Clutching At Straws' was the best album we made," he begins. "I was dealing with a situation I didn't want to be in, being with people I didn't really want to be with, but I left the band on a high and I made a rod for my own back, and that rod was, 'Well what would they have done next? What would a reunion be like if I went back?' – which is not going to f*cking happen.

"But in the same way I didn't want to end my solo career with a duff album. In 2015 I decided I was going to make an album and I was going to throw a number of kitchen sinks at it and make it the best thing I've made, so I can walk away from it with my head held high. Even with previous albums, I'd be in the studio singing a melody and I'd think, 'F*ck I did that on such and such an album...'"

But as the old saying goes, man plans and the gods laugh... "I got writers block and that puts the fear in me," he says. "My head was taking on board all of these feelings and images and I couldn't get it down onto the page. In 2016 I was really stuck. I lost a year and that was really to do with the death of my father. I didn't realise until the end of the year how much it had affected me, and I couldn't get anything down onto paper. It was sh*te, it was clumsy.

"Then in 2017, I had loads of notes and observations and there was nothing complete. I was sitting down there [in the studio] and I got this phrase 'Little Man...' I'd been reading Hans Fallada, a book called *Little Man, What Now?*, about a guy and his young wife in 1930s Germany dealing with the political upheaval and the recession. I realised I wanted to do everything in the third person, and once I went into the third person it became a lot easier to get the flow together. I sat listening to the song I wrote, 'Little Man What Now?', the other night with my wife, Simone, and I was in tears because that was me. I was in some very bad depressive states and that lyric definitely saved me. I had to carve it out of me, edit it sharply, and I'm really proud of that lyric.

"Then 'Man With A Stick' came along and that helped me address my father's death. At the end of 2016 I had a spinal operation. In March of 2017 I had a huge rotator cuff operation on my shoulder. Then I had heart problems and I had to get an ablation to sort out the arrhythmia in my heart, which was caused, I think, by being under for three and-a-half hours during the shoulder operation. I went over the amount of time I should have on general anaesthetic.

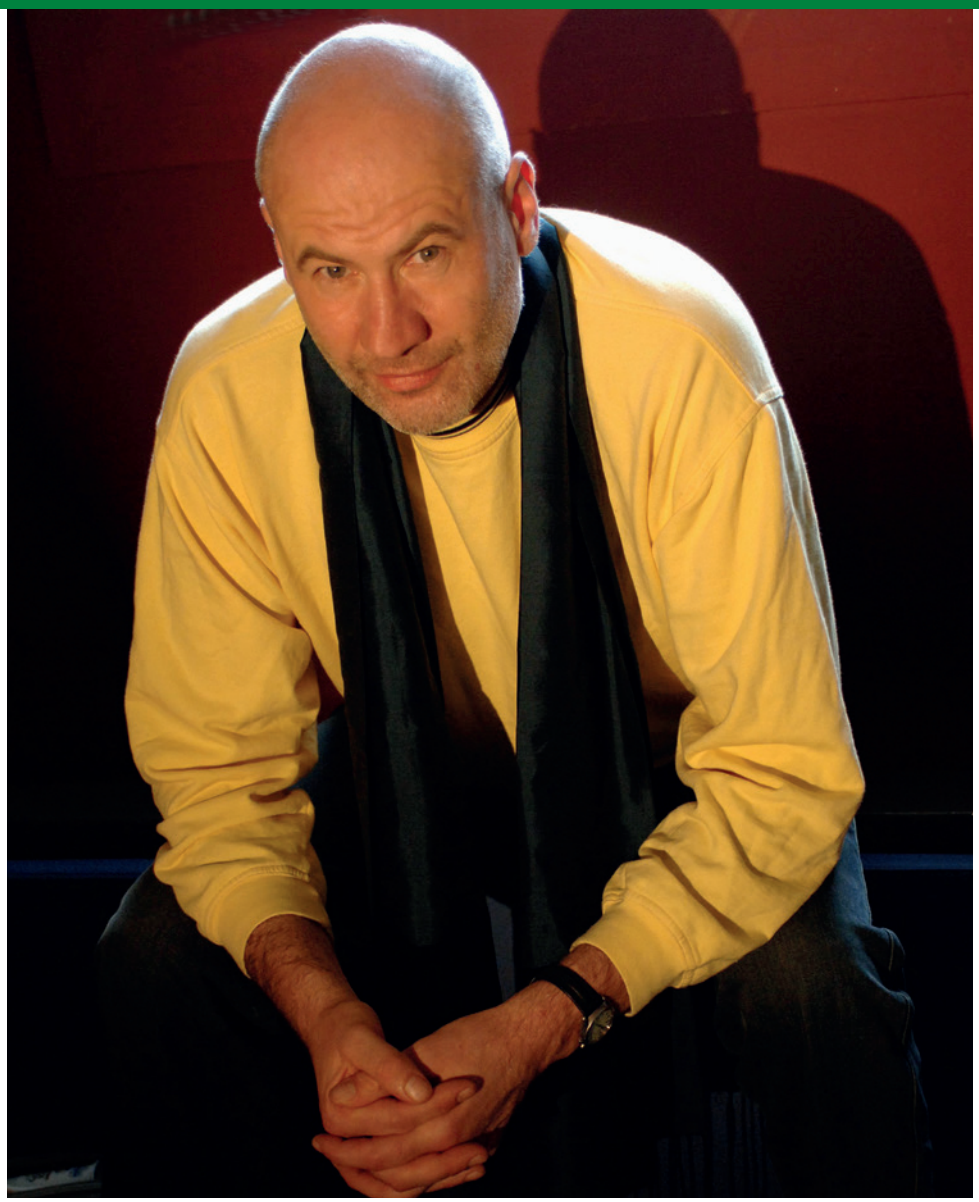
"I started thinking of my own mortality. I was aware of my own physical weakness. I'm not the fit guy that I used to be, so 'Man With A Stick' was seeing myself as my father. This is where I'm going to go, it's inevitable.

"By putting it in the third person there was a bit of a shield and I could hide behind that shield. Then in 2019 I had sepsis twice. I remember being in the ambulance on the way to the Royal Infirmary Hospital and if my wife hadn't called the ambulance I wouldn't be here. They stopped on the A1 road to give me oxygen and the paramedic said, 'Another 40 minutes and it would have been critical.' That freaked me out."

"I WENT AND SAW A VOICE SPECIALIST. THEY SAID I HAD A GROWTH ON MY CHORDS. I THOUGHT, 'OK THIS IS A PAYBACK FOR ALL THE BENSON & HEDGES AND THE JACK DANIEL'S.' I DIDN'T KNOW IF IT WAS CANCER…"

Photo: Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns

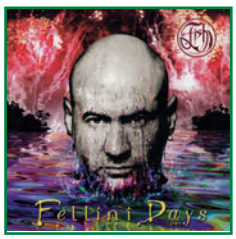
FISH



FISH'S BIGGEST moment on the journey was yet to come, one that revealed a lot more about the way he's lived his life. "I've discovered that I'm on the spectrum," he says bluntly. " I'm autistic, full stop.

"I wanted to write about a relationship where one or both parties were either bi-polar or had a personality disorder, about how they're really in love with each other, but the trigger point is here. And I started to research it and the more I researched it, the more I thought, 'F*ck... this is what I do...'

"When I get into an argument I get very heated and loud and I have difficulty processing information and bringing it out. I have to plan everything. Some people have said I'm a control freak, but I've got to know, 'If this argument goes here, this is what I go back and say...' I realised I was quite autistic.



"When I've been in relationships in the past and I've been in an argument I have to write down everything that occurred in that argument. I have to go through the whole thing again and write down what I meant to say, and I realised that's quite spectral behaviour.

"It's one of the things I've done my whole life. Dealing with situations where you become enraged with what's on the television, Donald Trump or whatever, people lying barefaced, part of my spectral behaviour is taking those problems and writing them down, and then I feel like I've dealt with them. There's a solace in it, a catharsis.

"I saw a counsellor for the first time in 2010 and she said, 'Your problem is you've dealt with all of your problems from an intellectual perspective. You've analysed them all, but emotionally you've not dealt with them.' She was absolutely spot-on. It goes back to that spectrum thing that I discovered, that I was keeping everything inside and I wasn't letting it come out. And when it does come out it comes out in strange ways."

COVID-19 HAS slowed Fish's plans to a degree. The 'Weltschmerz' tour has been postponed once already and if the rearranged dates can't go ahead relatively soon it will likely be cancelled altogether. A farewell tour, pencilled for the end of next year, is also in the balance. Itching away at him are the plans for a new life as a writer and an increasing reluctance to leave home. He's married again, extremely happily, and is now an avid and productive gardener, as fans of his social media will know.

"That's where I am now," he says. "I came into the music industry with no prior knowledge. I was learning on my feet and I was doing things other people wouldn't think of doing. It's the same way with screenplays and general creative writing. I'm approaching it from an untrained point of view.

"There are no rules and I can do what I want. Let's go writing – words are where I'm at. I'm a writer who can sing, rather than a singer who can write.

"I'm not an idiot, I'm a realist. I'm not going to be playing arenas any time soon. I'm wearing myself down

Photos: Getty Images/Rob Verhorst/Redferns; Getty Images/Brian Rasic

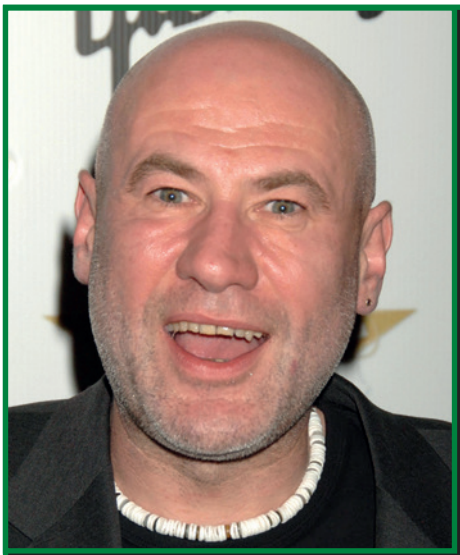
when I do tour. I did six weeks in Europe a couple of years ago and I loved every show, but the other 22 hours in the day I f*cking hated. 'What am I doing that for? I've got my wife here, I've got the garden – do I really want to be away from them?' It's money versus a basic quality of life, exactly the thing I equated in 1988."

So at some point soon a symbolic change or two will come as Fish exits stage left. The first will entail stripping back the studio control room, the last remnant of the home recording set-up where Fish has made every album since 'Vigil...'. He will, he thinks, pull out all of the soundproofing and the panelling and take the room back to brick. "Then I'll sit in it for a couple of months and decide what I'm going to do and how it's going to look. It will be my writing room."

The other decision concerns that intricate personality of his, one that has always been split between rock star Fish and man in the street Derek Dick. I ask if he's thought about what name he'll use when he starts on the screenplays and the books.

"I don't know... I'm thinking about that. I think I'm going to go with Derek Dick," he says. "For a while, there was that weird psychological thing going on where anything that went off the rails was Fish. But I found..." He pauses. "I was listening to the 'Incubus' lyric [from Marillion's 1984 album 'Fugazi'] not so long ago. It's supposed to be about a photographer and an actress, but I heard it from a different angle and I realised it was Derek addressing Fish... The way I look at writing is, there's a subconscious level and sometimes you don't find out until years later why you did it..."

> "WITH 'WELTSCHMERZ' I'M CLOSING THE CIRCLE. 'VIGIL...' WAS A REALLY IMPORTANT RECORD FOR ME, AND I DIDN'T WANT TO END WITH SOMETHING THAT WASN'T THE BEST RECORD I COULD POSSIBLY MAKE."



FISH'S FAVOURITE FIVE

The Big Man's choice of songs from his solo career you *need* to listen to

Vigil' (from 'Vigil In A Wilderness Of Mirrors', 1990)
"This song more than any other showed that I could come out of the Marillion frame and into another, and even today it feels relevant to me. It's a very personal song because it was the first one."

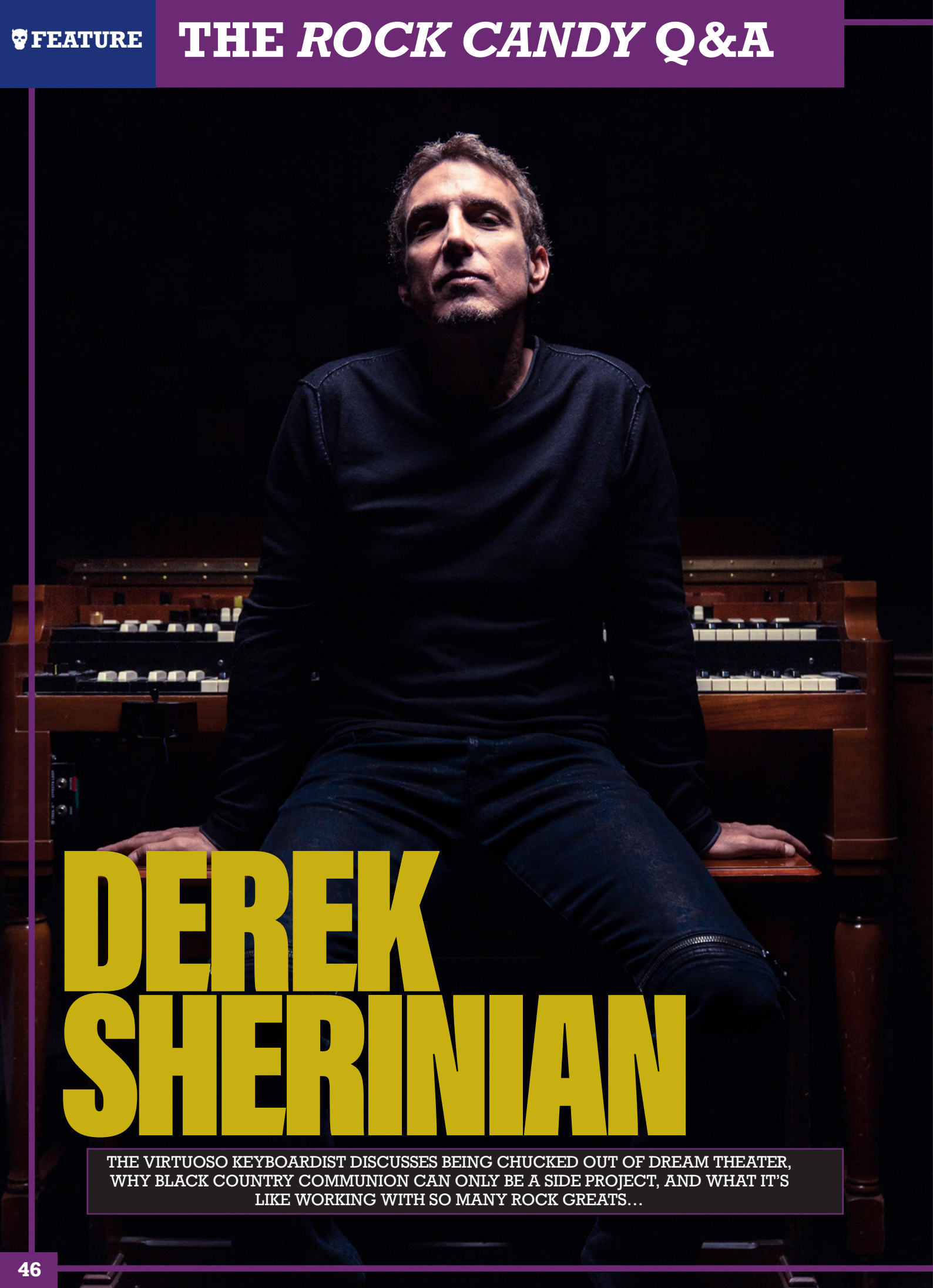
'Credo' (From 'Internal Exile', 1991)
"That lyric was kicking around in 1988 in various pieces, but it didn't come through until 'Internal Exile'. I played it for the *Fish On Friday* sessions [that he conducts each week on his Facebook page] and I actually got really emotional listening to it. My daughter Tara had just been born, and I was sitting watching the TV with her in my arms, and I was watching the bombing of Baghdad on TV. That line, 'It don't mean nothing' I picked up from the film *Hamburger Hill*, one of the greatest movies ever made about the experience of being a soldier in Vietnam."

'Long Cold Day' (From 'Fellini Days', 2001)
"That was an album that got lost in the fog, but it's one that shows I've got very strong rock roots. I'm not just the progressive rock guy. This song has a bluesy vibe and a groove, and it's one of the lyrics I enjoy singing on stage the most because there's so much bile and attack in it. It's that f*ck you attitude, and people never expected me to do that."

The 'High Wood' Suite (From 'A Feast Of Consequences', 2013)
"It started as an attempt to write a 15-minute song about World War One and then it evolved. I stumbled across this story of my grandfather's experience and it was about taking that experience and putting it into the songs. I became completely obsessed with it, and I think it's an indicative moment of where I was going to go as a writer."

'Little Man What Now?' (From 'Weltschmerz', 2020)
"The key breakthrough song for this album. I got into the darkness of Hans Fallada's writing and I saw the title *Little Man, What Now?* and thought, 'That's me...'."

THE *ROCK CANDY* Q&A



DEREK SHERINIAN

THE VIRTUOSO KEYBOARDIST DISCUSSES BEING CHUCKED OUT OF DREAM THEATER, WHY BLACK COUNTRY COMMUNION CAN ONLY BE A SIDE PROJECT, AND WHAT IT'S LIKE WORKING WITH SO MANY ROCK GREATS…

KEYBOARD MAGAZINE ONCE CALLED YOU "A KEYBOARD HERO FOR A NEW GENERATION." BUT DID YOU ALWAYS WANT TO TINKLE THE IVORIES?
"I would rather have been a star guitarist to be honest, but I started to play keyboards at an early age and quickly realised it was the instrument I was *meant* to play. Even so, I like to think I approach playing the keyboards like a guitarist in some ways. Some of my biggest influences are Eddie Van Halen, Jeff Beck, Randy Rhoads, Allan Holdsworth, and Yngwie Malmsteen – all guitarists!"

DID YOU EVER TRY TO BECOME A GUITAR HERO?
"Sadly I'm not someone who can pick up any instrument and play it immediately. Playing keyboards is where I feel most at home. I can play a little guitar, but it's nothing to write home about. And when I play drums, it's horrible."

YOUR FIRST PRO GIG WAS WITH FORMER BAND OF GYPSIES DRUMMER BUDDY MILES. WAS THAT COOL?
"I was 22 years old when a mutual friend introduced the two of us back in 1988. Together we played all the blues clubs right across America and it was an amazing experience. I felt like I was just one degree away from Jimi Hendrix himself. It was like his energy had been passed straight on to Buddy."

YOUR BIG BREAK CAME IN 1989 WHEN ALICE COOPER HIRED YOU FOR HIS TOURING BAND. WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM HIM?
"Professionalism. The way Alice treats the media and his fans is really classy and I hope some of that has rubbed off on me. Getting to work with Alice was a really big break. I got to tour the world and appear on MTV, which was fantastic. I'd work with Alice again any time."

"I LIKE TO THINK I APPROACH PLAYING THE KEYBOARDS LIKE A GUITARIST IN SOME WAYS. SOME OF MY BIGGEST INFLUENCES ARE EDDIE VAN HALEN, JEFF BECK, RANDY RHOADS, ALLAN HOLDSWORTH, AND YNGWIE MALMSTEEN – ALL GUITARISTS!"

YOU DECIDED TO JOIN DREAM THEATER IN 1994. WHY DID YOU MAKE THAT CHOICE?
"To be honest nothing else was happening for me at that time. I toured with Alice and then went out with Kiss, but the whole early-'90s Seattle explosion meant my work dried up. I heard that Dream Theater were holding auditions for a keyboardist, and while their music wasn't the sort of thing I normally listened to I thought it would be a challenge to see if I could play it. When I actually got the job it was wonderful. I realised it was OK to be a virtuoso in a rock environment. Dream Theater also gave me a lot of exposure, because suddenly I was out front as a full member of a band."

SO IF BEING IN THAT GROUP WAS SO GREAT, WHY DID YOU LEAVE IN 1999?
"That was their decision, not mine! Turned out they wanted someone else [Jordan Rudess got the gig], so that was the end of the line for me. It sucked, of course, but you have to be prepared for whatever life throws at you. How you deal with setbacks defines you as a person."

YOU BOUNCED BACK QUICKLY, DEVELOPING A SOLO CAREER AND BECOMING A 'GO TO' PLAYER FOR TONS OF ROCKERS. HOW DO YOU GET SO MUCH WORK?
"Well I don't think I've ever turned anyone down, which might have something to do with it! If someone asks me to do a session I'll always oblige. All you need to do is contact me via Instagram and send me the track. I'm fortunate to be doing a lot of that type of work while there's no chance of touring because of the pandemic."

LET'S ASK YOU ABOUT SOME OF THOSE NAME PLAYERS YOU'VE WORKED WITH. WAS YNGWIE MALMSTEEN A DIFFICULT CUSTOMER?
"I've never had a bad time, not even a bad conversation, with Yngwie. We get along very well. I know how he works and what he expects of me, and as long as you turn up and play your part the way he wants it then there's no problem. I love Yngwie as a musician. Every time I hear him play I get chills down my spine."

WHAT ABOUT MICHAEL SCHENKER?
"I'm also a big fan of Michael's, so for him to ask me to play on a track for his forthcoming 50th anniversary album was a real honour. Better still, he's now agreed to be on *my* next record."

HOW DID YOUR RECENT COLLABORATION WITH DAVID COVERDALE HAPPEN?
"Mr Coverdale asked me to redo all the keyboard parts from the Whitesnake 'Slip Of The Tongue' and 'Restless Heart' albums, and that material is now being released slowly but surely. In order to do that I obviously had to listen to the way the parts sounded in the first place. How can I put this? There's a reason why David wanted them redone!"

BLACK COUNTRY COMMUNION – THE GROUP YOU FOUNDED WITH GLENN HUGHES, JASON BONHAM, AND JOE BONAMASSA BACK IN 2009 – IS WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL A 'SPORADIC' BAND. DO YOU WISH THE FOUR OF YOU COULD DO MORE TOGETHER?
"We all know Black Country Communion's a side project. As far as Joe's concerned his solo career takes precedence, and that's something we've accepted. Mind you, if Black Country Communion were a regular band I'm convinced we'd be really big. The upside is that the way we operate makes me believe that Black Country Communion can go on forever. I expect there'll be a new album next year."

YOUR LATEST RELEASE IS AN EIGHTH SOLO ALBUM, 'THE PHOENIX'. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT IT?
"I'm very excited about this album. I wrote and produced 'The Phoenix' with [drummer] Simon Phillips and to have someone like him as a musical partner is fantastic. I was also able to call on some brilliant guitarists and bassists to help out on the record – people like Steve Vai, Bumblefoot, Joe Bonamassa, Zakk Wylde, Billy Sheehan, and Tony Franklin. It's pretty mindblowing. What I think we've done is create a proper album here, one that you want to listen to from start to finish. That's always the sign of a great record."

ONE LAST QUESTION. WHO'S STILL ON YOUR BUCKET LIST OF MUSOS YOU'D LOVE TO WORK WITH?
"Let me put it this way... If Jeff Beck got in touch, then I reckon he could probably twist my arm into doing something with him!"

Interview by Malcolm Dome. Photo: Greg Vorobiov

EYEWITNESS DATELINE: 1990

THE MAKING OF SCORPIONS' 'CRAZY WORLD'

To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the German band's seven-million-selling mega-album and its monster hit 'Wind Of Change', *Rock Candy Mag* talks to vocalist **Klaus Meine**, and guitarists **Rudolf Schenker** and **Matthias Jabs**, to bring you the definitive story direct from the people who were there...

hoto: IconicPix/George Chin

EYEWITNESS DATELINE: 1990

WITH THE 1990 RELEASE *of their 11th studio album, 'Crazy World', the Scorpions not only waved bye-bye to a decade that had turned them from a specialist hard rock act into a staple of US radio, but they also closed the door on a long-standing relationship that had defined their sound.*

After recording eight studio albums with German producer Dieter Dierks – starting with 1975's 'In Trance' and concluding 13 years later with 'Savage Amusement' – the band from Hanover severed ties with the man who'd signed the group to his development company Breeze Music back in 1976.

Dierks had undoubtedly helped to develop the signature Scorpions sound, but his uncomplicated recordings made the band a very different sonic proposition to most of the shiny hard rock that was dominating US radio and MTV at that time.

Finally free of their most important contractual obligation vocalist Klaus Meine, guitarists Rudolf Schenker and Matthias Jabs, drummer Herman Rarebell, and bassist Francis Buchholz also decided the time was right to do some additional house-cleaning. Out went their UK label, Harvest, as the band signed to Vertigo. Mercury, who put out Scorpions product in the States, were retained.

On the back of a white hot streak producing hit albums for Whitesnake, Nightranger, and Kingdom Come, the American Keith Olsen put 'Crazy Nights' together. Released in November of 1990, the album would go on to sell over two million copies in the US alone, and would be the last Scorpions album to achieve that milestone. But the success of 'Crazy World' was dwarfed by the commercial and cultural impact of one song, the single 'Wind Of Change', a number that became both the de facto *anthem of freedom as the European Eastern Bloc started to disintegrate, and also one of the world's best-known tunes.*

There would also be a disintegration of sorts within the ranks of the Scorpions in the aftermath of 'Crazy World'. Francis Buchholz would end his 18-year association with the band, leaving the group over a dispute about management in 1992. He would never record with the Scorpions again.

To celebrate the 30th anniversary of 'Crazy World' Rock Candy Mag *spoke with Scorpions lynchpins Meine, Schenker, and Jabs to produce a highly detailed account of the making of what many consider to be the last classic Scorps album...*

The Scorpions line-up that recorded 'Crazy World'. L-R: Rudolf Schenker (guitar), Matthias Jabs (guitar), Klaus Meine (vocals), Herman Rarebell (drums), Francis Buchholz (bass)

PRIOR TO THE RECORDING OF 'CRAZY WORLD' THERE WERE PLENTY OF RUMOURS THAT YOU'D BEEN COUNTING DOWN THE DAYS UNTIL YOUR CONTRACT WITH DIETER DIERKS EXPIRED. WAS THAT TRUE?

Matthias: "We'd worked with Dieter since the mid-'70s, and he'd produced some of our strongest albums. But he insisted that we should work in his studio in a little village near Cologne, when we were dreaming about recording in New York or Los Angeles. Of course these days we know the environment isn't so important, but we were young at the time..."

Klaus: "We felt like a bird that had been in a cage for too long. Then suddenly the door was open and we could fly out to freedom. What had happened previously was that we'd tour all over the world and would then have to come back to Germany, to the small Dierks Studio in Stommeln, to record a new album. It was time for us to open a new chapter in our career and try a fresh approach. We'd come to the end of our contract with Dieter, so we decided it was time to move on and work with someone else. Simple as that."

Rudolf: "I wasn't happy with [previous album, 1988's] 'Savage Amusement'. Dieter wanted to be a second Mutt Lange. He'd started to use drum computers, which is why 'Savage Amusement' sounded a bit stiff, a bit robotic. There was some great technology starting to become available by then, but our time working with Dieter was over, creatively speaking. We'd been together for too long and we felt we needed new energy. We believed we'd get that by working with a new producer."

Matthias: "Recording 'Savage Amusement' seemed to take forever – about a year and a half – and we didn't really feel that motivated. So when we ended up mixing the album ourselves in London, then handed over the tapes, that felt like the end of the Dieter Dierks era for us."

WITH SO MUCH MONEY BEING MADE OUT OF ROCK BANDS IN THE '80S DIERKS CAN'T HAVE BEEN TOO HAPPY ABOUT YOUR DECISION...

Klaus: "Look, there was no problem at all between us. Dieter was a big part of our lives for a long time, but he understood why we did what we did. Nobody can deny that he was an important part of our success. His production was crucial to what we achieved in the '70s and '80s, and without Dieter I'm not sure those albums would have been as big as they were. We nearly worked

with him again years later [on 2004's 'Unbreakable'], but in the end we couldn't make things work to our mutual satisfaction."

Matthias: "I personally always had a good relationship with Dieter and it was fun to work with him on the guitars, because he had good ideas in that area. Looking back, he produced some of our strongest albums. After we moved on he came to see us on tour. There were no hard feelings and we worked with him again. Around 2001 we needed two new songs for a compilation called 'Bad For Good: The Very Best Of The Scorpions', so we went back to Dieter's studio to record 'Bad For Good' and 'Cause I Love You'. I'm not sure why Dieter didn't end up producing 'Unbreakable'. Contractual reasons, maybe."

ONCE YOU'D PARTED COMPANY WITH DIERKS WHO WAS YOUR FIRST CHOICE TO PRODUCE THE NEW ALBUM?

Klaus: "Our first choice – in fact our only choice – was Bruce Fairbairn. We'd heard from so many bands like Bon Jovi and Aerosmith what a great person he was to work with, and that recording at his Little Mountain Studio in Vancouver was a wonderful experience. So we contacted Bruce to see if he was interested in working with us, which he was. We arranged to meet him in our manager Doc McGhee's office on Sunset Strip in West Hollywood and played him some demos of the new songs we'd been working on. Bruce sat there and made notes on everything. He was very meticulous and that impressed us. He immediately highlighted one song that he believed had huge potential to be a big hit – and that was 'Wind Of Change'. He told us that the only thing it lacked was a really memorable chorus."

"I WASN'T HAPPY WITH 'SAVAGE AMUSEMENT'. DIETER WANTED TO BE A SECOND MUTT LANGE. HE'D STARTED TO USE DRUM COMPUTERS, WHICH IS WHY 'SAVAGE AMUSEMENT' SOUNDED A BIT STIFF, A BIT ROBOTIC. OUR TIME WORKING WITH DIETER WAS OVER, CREATIVELY SPEAKING. WE'D BEEN TOGETHER FOR TOO LONG AND WE FELT WE NEEDED NEW ENERGY."
RUDOLF SCHENKER

SO WHY DIDN'T FAIRBAIRN END UP PRODUCING 'CRAZY WORLD'?

Klaus: "Just before we were due to go to Vancouver Bruce phoned to say that he couldn't work with us, because he'd just been offered the chance to produce AC/DC. Their proposed schedule clashed with ours and Bruce said he couldn't turn AC/DC down because he'd always wanted to work with them. He was very apologetic, but hoped we understood."

Matthias: "It happened early in the 'Crazy World' process when we were still working on the material. Everybody accepted it immediately, because AC/DC were such a huge band. Plus they were ready to go and we weren't quite there. Bruce probably could have done us after them, but we didn't want to wait. We weren't disappointed, because we knew we were at the beginning of our new career and could work with him some other time."

Rudolf: "It was a great chance for Bruce. He'd always wanted to work with AC/DC and the album he did with them, 'The Razors Edge', was a big hit. It was the right thing for him to do."

Klaus: "To be fair we didn't have much of a choice but to accept his decision. It wouldn't have worked to have someone producing us with everyone knowing he'd rather be working on another project. Bruce did say he hoped we'd get the chance to work together one day and that happened on our next album [1993's 'Face The Heat']. We might well have done more work with Bruce, but sadly he died in 1999."

Matthias: "I do think 'Crazy World' would have sounded different if Bruce had produced. For example, when Klaus did his vocals on 'Face The Heat' he wanted a little reverb, so that he would sound nicer in the room while he sang. But Bruce said, 'No, I won't give you anything. I'll record you dry. And then when I put the effects in later, you're going to be surprised how good you sound. But first of all the performance has to be spot on.' Some musicians give a better performance when they feel better and they hear themselves in a nicer way. But Bruce would only make it sound great in the mixing process and not in the recording process. It's two different philosophies."

SO HAVING BEEN LEFT IN THE LURCH BY BRUCE FAIRBAIRN WHO DID YOU TURN TO?

Klaus: "Keith Olsen. To be fair it was Bruce who suggested Keith, and Keith's track record was incredible. He'd worked with Fleetwood Mac, Whitesnake, Ozzy... so many massive artists on albums that had sold millions. We'd opted for Bruce at first because bands that we knew personally had recommended him. But Keith was undoubtedly a heavyweight producer, at least on the same level as Bruce. His profile might even have been higher to tell you the truth."

Rudolf: "I think our manager Doc McGhee suggested ►

Klaus interview by Malcolm Dome; Rudolf interview by Dave Reynolds; Matthias interview by Jason Arnopp.
Photos: Getty Images/Krasner/Trebitz/Redferns; Getty Images/Philippe Renault/Gamma-Rapho

Keith, and he came over to Germany to listen to the material we had. I knew pretty much straight away that it was 100 per cent the right choice to have Keith produce the record."

DID YOU HAVE TO PERSUADE OLSEN TO WORK WITH YOU?

Klaus: "Not at all. We contacted Keith to see if he was available and not only was he free at the time, but he was also very excited to work with this bunch of Germans!"

Rudolf: "And I'm a great believer that a positive result will arise from a negative situation. We'd worked with Dieter for so long that he was like the sixth member of the band. Keith brought a new authority. We bought into him completely when he talked about where he wanted to go with us. I think we wanted to show Dieter that we could do things for ourselves without him."

WERE ALL THE SONGS FOR THE ALBUM WRITTEN BEFORE YOU STARTED TO RECORD?

Rudolf: "By the time Keith came on board we'd been working on the songs in my studio in Germany and we had them all to a point that was very close to what Keith actually worked on."

Klaus: "We had all the material ready in advance. There was no desperate scrambling around for songs to make up the quota."

Rudolf: "I'd already played Dieter Dierks 'Send Me An Angel' and some other songs that would end up on 'Crazy World' at the time we did 'Savage Amusement', but somehow he wasn't interested. So for me we changed producers at the right time."

Matthias: "I'd written potential songs for 'Savage Amusement', but they hadn't ended up being used by Dieter or the band. That changed on 'Crazy World'. I ended up co-writing two songs because Keith had a different way of looking at the songwriting. Dieter preferred the combination of Rudolf's writing and Klaus's lyrics, but with Keith everything opened up a bit more."

'CRAZY WORLD' WAS THE FIRST TIME YOU COLLABORATED EXTENSIVELY WITH AN OUTSIDE WRITER. WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO WORK WITH JIM VALLANCE?

Klaus: "It was Keith's idea. When he listened to what we had he felt that it was good, but that there was a need to improve things. He was right about that by the way. Keith came up with the suggestion of bringing in Jim Vallance. Jim was obviously very experienced and successful and you only had to listen to what he'd done with people like Bryan Adams and Aerosmith to appreciate what a good writer he was. So we went off to Vancouver where Jim lived and got along with him right away. It was mostly Herman and me collaborating with Jim, because the two of us worked on a lot of the lyrics, though the others in the band did make their contributions. Things went so well that we came up with three songs from scratch up in Vancouver; 'Don't Believe Her', 'Hit Between The Eyes', and 'Tease Me Please Me'."

Rudolf: "I don't remember it that way. For me it was Bruce Fairbairn who put us together with Jim Vallance. All the material had been pretty much composed and demoed in my German studio. The work with Jim was part of the pre-production work we did with Bruce. The songs were ready to go before we started working with Keith."

Matthias: "It was definitely Bruce who suggested Jim, because we didn't even know Keith at that point."

Klaus: "We did all the work in a small basement at Jim's house and it was weird to think that so many classics songs started life in that tiny room. Because we were in Vancouver we bumped into Bruce Fairbairn quite a bit and that could have been awkward because of the AC/DC situation. But there was never any problem."

Matthias: "I didn't go to Vancouver myself. I wrote 'Money And Fame' with Herman Rarebell, then showed 'Tease Me Please Me' to Jim. He made a more open arrangement of the chorus and someone came up with new lyrics, but the music is more or less me. I was very happy when 'Tease Me Please Me' became the first single and video, and then became the opening song to the Scorpions show for many years!"

"JUST BEFORE WE WERE DUE TO GO TO VANCOUVER TO RECORD, BRUCE FAIRBAIRN PHONED TO SAY THAT HE COULDN'T WORK WITH US BECAUSE HE'D JUST BEEN OFFERED THE CHANCE TO PRODUCE AC/DC. HE SAID HE COULDN'T TURN AC/DC DOWN."
KLAUS MEINE

WHAT EXACTLY DID VALLANCE BRING TO THE PARTY?

Rudolf: "There wasn't much Keith felt he needed to change, but Jim was good on song structure. We were open to trying something new, because you can only learn from working with people like Jim. And we weren't unaware that he'd written some very big hits for people like Bryan Adams! Interestingly, Keith ended up being very keen on 'Wind Of Change' and 'Send Me An Angel', neither of which Jim was involved in. Keith ended up being instrumental in getting the details, the atmosphere, the guitars, and the balance right on those two important songs."

Matthias: "I think Jim's input, helped by Keith Olsen, made the album more international. We'd worked with a German producer for more than a decade and internationally we were already very well known. But now, in our opinion, we actually *sounded* international."

> "KEITH OLSEN CAME OVER TO GERMANY TO LISTEN TO THE MATERIAL WE HAD. I KNEW PRETTY MUCH STRAIGHT AWAY THAT IT WAS 100 PER CENT THE RIGHT CHOICE TO HAVE HIM PRODUCE THE RECORD."
> **RUDOLPH SCHENKER**

TALKING OF THE SONGS YOU CAME UP WITH FOR THE ALBUM, 'KICKS AFTER SIX' IS THE ONLY SCORPIONS NUMBER EVER TO INCLUDE A WRITING CREDIT FOR BASSIST FRANCIS BUCHHOLZ. WHY WAS THAT?

Klaus: "Francis had a hand in the music for that one, but I can't remember exactly how he got to work with Jim on the song. Francis never wanted to be part of the writing process and that was never his strength, but he earned his credit on that song. It wasn't a case of us giving him a co-writing credit because we felt sorry for him."

Matthias: "I don't know if Francis had previously written songs, but 'Kicks After Six' was on the first demo he ever presented. It was a good song and one that transformed during the rehearsal process into what it finally became. When Keith wanted to have more writing from within the band, that made members like Francis and I feel better. Because if you keep trying to write something nobody wants to produce, that's frustrating after a while!"

Rudolf: "We were always ready to let other people in on the writing process. I wrote most of the songs at the very beginning of the band's career, but eventually everyone had the chance to contribute."

YOU STARTED RECORDING THE ALBUM AT GOODNIGHT L.A. STUDIOS. THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A REAL CHANGE AFTER SO MANY YEARS WITH DIETER DIERKS...

Klaus: "It was so different to the Dierks Studio. Keith had started out working at another famous LA studio called Sound City, but he ended up building his own place, Goodnight LA. It was a great studio and it was amazing for us to go to work there every day. Sometimes we had to pinch ourselves to make sure it was all real. We'd get in our rented convertibles and drive down Highway 101 to the studio. Talk about living the dream!"

Matthias: "In terms of the recording set-up, we all played together, with bass, drums, two guitars... and vocals *sometimes*, because you can't sing all day. We would redo things if they weren't right, but sometimes there would be a magic moment when everybody was really tight, in which case we would leave the take as it was. Herman played to a click track, I think for the first time. This was something he'd refused to do previously. He said, 'I don't need no stinking click.' But I'm sure Keith suggested it for 'Crazy World'. And Herman didn't argue, because we all wanted to be well-rehearsed. This was our first time in a LA studio with a pretty well-known producer, and we knew we'd better listen to what he had to say and not embarrass ourselves! This album felt like the start of a new era and we wanted to show the world how good we were. Herman's use of the click-track

Photos: IconicPix/George Chin; Mark Weiss

helped make some of his drums more consistent. Back then if you wanted to edit something and all of a sudden you had a different tempo... well you didn't have modern things like Pro Tools to make it easy. But Herman did well on 'Crazy World', I think. If you listen to 'Money And Fame', for instance, he plays some great stuff."

WHAT WAS THE GUITAR SET-UP?

Matthias: "I always used my first 1976 Gibson Explorer guitar – the one I painted white with black stripes. I think I was the one who made that guitar popular again! At the Frankfurt music fair in 1987, I met the Gibson people and told them that the guitar looked kind of big on me in photos. I asked if they could maybe reduce the body size. I also wanted a 24 fret neck, when it was normally 22, so I could have two octaves more, as well as the Floyd Rose tremolo, which was very much in fashion. Within a year I got the new Explorer prototype for the first tour with 'Savage Amusement', and I used that guitar most of the time on 'Crazy World'. They called it an Explorer 90, because it was 90 per cent of the original size. And of course, Rudolf always used Flying Vs. He had so many that you could never tell which one he played on any one song! I didn't have that problem, because I could basically record the whole album with my two Explorers."

HOW DIFFERENT WAS KEITH TO WORK WITH COMPARED TO DIETER?

Matthias: "Because we're from Germany, and the pronunciation of the vocals might not have been 100 per cent like English or American English, we really needed a vocal coach to get that right, and Keith concentrated on that a lot. That's why the album sounded very good vocally – you didn't know whether a German, English, or American was singing. Compared to Dieter Keith worked 'banker's hours', because we were in California, where things are a bit more easy-going anyway. With Dieter in Germany, it had been more like, 'Work work work work work!' until the middle of the night. Both producers were looking for a great result, but they had a different way of getting there."

Klaus: "You can't compare the two, because they were very different. Having spent years collaborating with Dieter we were used to his methods, so at first it was a little odd getting used to the way Keith worked. Both had their own systems, but Keith certainly got the best out of us. We became friendly to the point where he invited us all down to his house in Malibu."

Matthias: "We had a great time at Keith's place, which had a five-hole golf course and an extra pool house bigger than most people's houses. Keith had worked on Whitesnake's very successful '1987' album just before us. There was always something going on, you know, typical LA, with lots of chicks everywhere. But we really focused on working in the studio. Keith didn't like it when people came to visit. He was very disciplined about keeping our doors closed to outsiders – but then he'd invite everyone to his house! We also played a lot of table tennis throughout the 'Crazy World' sessions. I'm pretty good, but it was always a hard battle with Keith, who held the bat like the Chinese do. He was really difficult to beat."

THERE'S A RUMOUR THAT YOU MET KURT COBAIN WHILE RECORDING AT GOODNIGHT L.A...

Klaus: "Our studio was in a small parking lot in the Van Nuys area and Nirvana were recording 'Nevermind' at Sound City, which was pretty much next door. Ozzy Osbourne was in Goodnight LA at the same time as us, actually. Someone did tell me that Cobain came across to our studio once and had a listen to what we were doing, but none of us ever met him. You can't listen to 'Nevermind' and say that Nirvana were in any way inspired by the Scorpions!"

Matthias: "Would I have liked to have met Kurt Cobain? No. I don't know if we would have had much to say to each other."

Dieter Dierks preferred the Schenker/Meine writing team, but Keith Olsen was more open to other songwriters for 'Crazy World'

SO IF THINGS WERE GOING SO WELL AT GOODNIGHT LA, HOW COME YOU ENDED UP SHIFTING THE PROJECT TO WISSELOORD STUDIOS IN HOLLAND?

Klaus: "We were having trouble getting the exact sounds we wanted at Goodnight LA, but I don't remember all the detail. I just remember that whatever we tried to do, we couldn't fix the problem and eventually we all realised the only solution was to move to a different place."

Matthias: "We'd had a good experience in LA and had the drums and bass recorded. We weren't that happy with the guitar sounds, though, and so we just went to Holland for the guitars and vocals. I don't know if the

budget played a role too, because obviously to record in Los Angeles was always very, very expensive, with everyone staying in hotels and driving rental cars."
Klaus: "We looked at a bunch of studios in LA, but couldn't find anything that was right for us. One of our engineers on the project was a Dutch guy called Erwin Musper. He knew Wisseloord Studios in Hilversum well, and told us that it was a superb place and that we should seriously consider moving the project over there to get the album done the way we wanted to."
Rudolf: "Erwin had worked with Mutt Lange [at Wisseloord] and I think that played a part in the decision. He was a very sharp engineer, so you tended to listen to

Photo: Getty Images/Koh Hasebe/Shinko Music

what he said. Plus I think we were trying to make sure our sound wasn't becoming too Americanised. I think that was another reason why we went back to Holland, to make sure we retained our European feel."

HOW DID KEITH OLSEN FEEL ABOUT THE IDEA OF MOVING STUDIOS?

Klaus: "We were concerned that Keith wouldn't want to leave the States, so I was surprised when he was really into the idea. There are some producers who would have probably quit the project rather than move from their own place in LA to a studio in a forest in Holland with a totally different vibe. But Keith decided to put the album first, because he knew we had to find a studio where we could get the sound right. And Wisseloord really was incredible. We knew that Def Leppard and Iron Maiden had both worked there and were really happy with the results. The place had state-of-the-art equipment and the problems we had in LA disappeared in Holland."

WHAT DID OLSEN MAKE OF THE STUDIO?

Klaus: "Keith loved it. He enjoyed the rural setting and was impressed with the whole set-up. If he hadn't been satisfied then I'm sure he would have asked us to find somewhere else. We were also very lucky to have not only Erwin Musper, but also Attie Bauw as one of our engineers. They both did a brilliant job and made sure the album ended up sounding as good as it does."
Matthias: "Wisseloord was a big complex, incorporating three or four studios. Keith actually checked each of the studios himself first. He was a good engineer, as well as a good producer, and so the board and everything was very important to him. Of course, this was way before the days when you could simply go online and see a 3D guided tour of a studio, so Keith needed to look at everything in person, but he liked it. The people were nice, the restaurant was good, and there were lots of lounges. Universal and PolyGram had offices upstairs there at the time, and we were with them at that point, so I guess that was probably another reason to make the move to Holland."

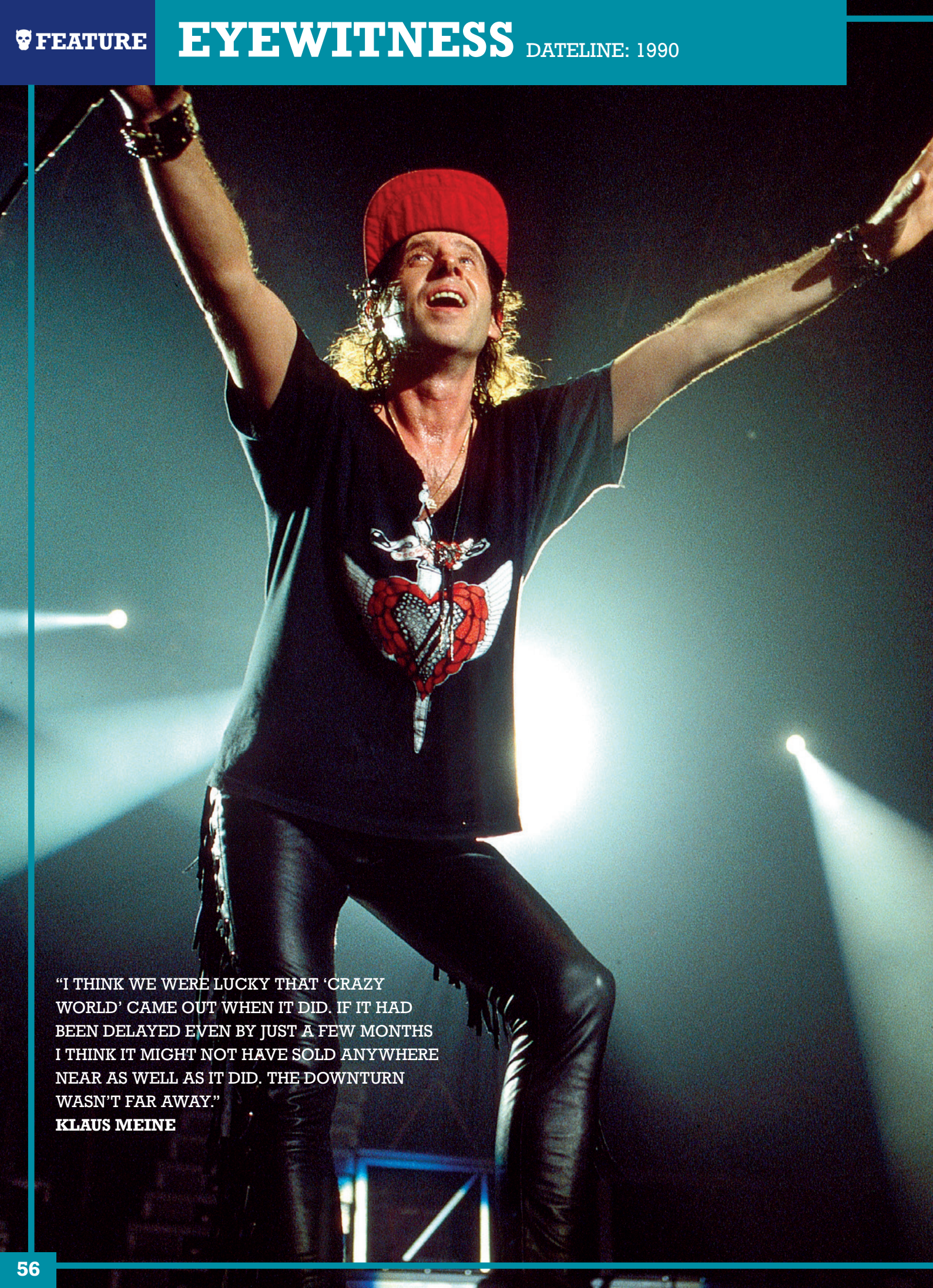
HOLLAND AND GERMANY ARE GEOGRAPHICALLY CLOSE. WERE YOU ABLE TO POP HOME ONCE YOU STARTED RECORDING THERE?

Klaus: "Sure. We all went home a lot, because it was so easy. I could get in my car and be back at my place two and a half hours later. That was useful too, because whenever I did that drive I'd take along a cassette of the latest mixes we had and listen to them on the journey. It gave me time to hear how things were developing."
Matthias: "Being at Wisseloord also meant that individual members didn't have to hang around at the studio if they didn't have anything to do that day. We were, at most, a three-and-a-half hour drive to Hanover."

HOW MUCH OF THE FINAL ALBUM WAS RECORDED IN WISSELOORD, AND HOW MUCH WAS DONE AT GOODNIGHT LA?

Klaus: "I don't remember whether there was much recording from LA that ended up on the album, but I don't *think* there was that much. I do know that all my vocals were done in Holland and a lot of the guitar parts were recorded there as well."
Rudolf: "I seem to remember that the album was pretty much done apart from the vocals when we moved to the studio in Holland."
Matthias: "Broadly speaking, we did the basic tracks in LA and the overdubs in Holland. Maybe we kept a few guitars from the basic tracks we did in LA, so not *all* of that stuff was done in Holland. But I think most of the vocals and the final lead guitars were done there. In terms of how Rudolf and I divided up the lead breaks, I'm more of a lead guitar player than he is. I play solos on the rock songs, the fastest songs, because Rudolf doesn't do the faster stuff so well. So in order for him to record some leads on our albums he usually plays on the ballads. Not always, but that's generally how we divide it. So on 'Crazy World' he could play the melody of 'Send Me An Angel' or 'Wind Of Change'."

EYEWITNESS DATELINE: 1990



"I THINK WE WERE LUCKY THAT 'CRAZY WORLD' CAME OUT WHEN IT DID. IF IT HAD BEEN DELAYED EVEN BY JUST A FEW MONTHS I THINK IT MIGHT NOT HAVE SOLD ANYWHERE NEAR AS WELL AS IT DID. THE DOWNTURN WASN'T FAR AWAY."
KLAUS MEINE

WHICH SONGS FROM THE ALBUM SESSIONS WERE PARTICULARLY MEANINGFUL TO YOU?

Rudolf: "'Send Me An Angel'. I'd started to work on that song after I bought a lovely acoustic from a shop in Celle, a town close to my home in Hanover. I'd bought a couple of acoustic guitars in the Philippines, but I wasn't that happy with them. So I took them to this shop to see if they could fix them up. I noticed that they had a very old acoustic guitar on display that you'd normally use to play German folk music. I asked the shop owner if he wanted to sell it, but he told me it was for display only. Then when my wife went back to pick up the other guitars the guy asked her if I was still interested in buying it. I ended up getting that guitar and started working on 'Send Me An Angel' with it, which is one of the reasons why the song has a distinctive sound. I've always been happy when people have told me that song has been a big help getting them through problems in their lives."

The band's visit to Moscow in '89 inspired 'Wind Of Change'

"KLAUS HAD THE WHISTLING ON HIS DEMO OF 'WIND OF CHANGE', BUT HE ONLY DID THAT BECAUSE HE COULDN'T PLAY THE MELODY ON GUITAR! I TRIED AT LEAST 12 VERSIONS OF GUITAR INTROS, BUT HAVING GUITAR INSTEAD OF THE WHISTLING NEVER FELT RIGHT."
MATTHIAS JABS

WHY DID YOU CALL THE ALBUM 'CRAZY WORLD'?

Klaus: "We were having the usual nightmare of coming up with an album title. Unless you've been through the process of trying to come up with one yourself then you can't really appreciate how hard it is. After a lot of brainstorming we settled on 'Restless Nights', which we all thought was OK, and at least that meant it was all sorted. Then one day Herman came into the studio and said he'd seen George Bush Snr., who was US president at the time, talking on TV. Bush had mentioned that we were living in a crazy world and Herman told us he thought 'Crazy World' would be a better title. Straightaway we all thought that was right, so we ditched 'Restless Nights' and went with 'Crazy World' instead. We've got George Bush to thank for that title!"

Matthias: "I like the title. It suited the times back then, especially with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the breakdown of the USSR, which we all thought were big changes for the better. So it was a title that matched the era. It would also match this current era, I think..."

THE COVER ARTWORK WAS DONE BY THE HIGHLY RESPECTED STORM THORGERSON AND HIS HIPGNOSIS TEAM. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT NOW?

Matthias: "I was a bit disappointed at first, because we'd worked with that company before. Storm's partner did the design, which was meant to convey the philosophy of how one door closes and another one opens. But visually, we didn't think it was that striking. After the line of slightly sexual covers we'd had before, this one had a different philosophy and didn't really fit into the history of our covers from the '70s and '80s."

Klaus: "It's not our best cover, not by a long way. We were lucky enough to work with Helmut Newton for the cover of 'Love At First Sting' and that was superb. Storm had come up with the covers for both 'Lovedrive' and 'Animal Magnetism' and I was always a huge fan of what he did with 'Lovedrive'. I still think it's an absolutely fantastic cover. What we did for 'Crazy World' is OK, but nothing more than that. It's a bit underwhelming, really, and we should have done a lot better. But there it is – and we have to live with it."

Matthias: "But the success of the 'Crazy World' album tells you that the music is more important than the cover."

OF COURSE YOU CAN'T TALK ABOUT 'CRAZY WORLD' WITHOUT MENTIONING 'WIND OF CHANGE'...

Klaus: "That's true. We were writing for the album in '89 and the idea for 'Wind Of Change' came to me when we played the Moscow Music Peace Festival in August of that year. I could feel that change was in the air. There was a new young generation of Russians who weren't prepared to put up with the kind of restrictions that had been very much a way of life over there for so long. I had the whole song written by September of 1989, but a lot of people nowadays are convinced that I wrote the song about the fall of the Berlin Wall. But that didn't happen until November, two months *after* I wrote 'Wind Of Change'. So the song has nothing specific to do with the fall of the Berlin Wall and everything to do with what I saw going on in Russia at that time."

NEVERTHELESS THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL WAS A HUGE EVENT FOR ALL GERMANS, AND IN JULY OF 1990 YOU GOT TO PERFORM ALONGSIDE ROGER WATERS AS PART OF THE ENSEMBLE PERFORMING 'THE WALL' TO MARK ITS FALL.

Klaus: "And that was such an honour. Roger personally asked us to perform that day. He really wanted us on ►

Photos: IconicPix/George Chin; Mark Weiss

the bill, probably because we were a German band, and it was a real career highlight for us. The stage was set up in the No Man's Land area that had been in Berlin since the start of the Cold War, and it was a really strange experience to be performing there."

Matthias: "Roger flew in and came to Wisseloord while we were still recording. We went through the arrangements of his songs and we played 'In The Flesh'. There were three other songs we performed, but 'In The Flesh' was the opener and Roger wanted to make sure that everything was exactly as he wanted it. The whole show was strictly timed and we were due to make an entrance onstage in a limousine. It was this typical '80s American white stretch limo, an old Lincoln or something, with a female driver, and we were escorted by Hell's Angels or some kind of bikers, with six in front and six behind. I don't like those cars, though. They're so long and low, and sitting inside them with a guitar isn't great! Twenty-five seconds before we were due to be onstage, though, the car wouldn't start. The driver hadn't kept the engine running, like any professional would have done. In the end we rushed out of the car and just made it to the stage in time."

Francis and Klaus together on the 'Crazy World' tour before the big bust up

'WIND OF CHANGE' CERTAINLY BECAME SYMBOLIC OF THAT TIME. THE SONG WAS ACTUALLY WRITTEN ENTIRELY BY YOU, KLAUS, WHICH WAS SOMETHING OF A FIRST...

Klaus: "That's right, and I remember how nervous I was when I first played a demo of the song to the guys. I didn't know how they were going to react."

Rudolf: "To be honest, when Klaus played it for me for the first time I somehow thought there was a hook missing. I wanted to help him out, but he was determined that he was going to do it by himself. It turned out perfect."

Matthias: "Klaus first played 'Wind Of Change' to me on a plane somewhere and I liked it. He had the whistling on his demo, but he only did that because he couldn't play the melody on guitar! And so I tried at least 12 versions of guitar intros, which were similar to the whistling melody. You know, I did it in harmony and I did it with a 12-string guitar, and it sounded like Brian May or whatever. But having guitar instead of the whistling never felt right. There's a great story about 'Wind Of Change' from the very last day of the album's mixing sessions. I had a funny feeling and so I got up early, even though we'd worked the night before until 4am, because this day was the deadline and we knew we had to deliver. There was a lot of tension. And on this final day I heard one wrong note in the solo at the very end of 'Wind Of Change'! Everyone was so stressed out that nobody had heard it, neither Erwin nor Keith. But I got them to listen to the final harmony and they said, 'Oh, of course!' They'd been so focused on everything else. Anyway, we had to get Rudolf out of bed and bring his guitar into the studio so that he could play just that one note again! Editing the note into the solo wasn't as easy as it would be today. They had to copy it onto a tape that was already in the final mixing stage."

THERE HAS LONG BEEN A RUMOUR THAT THE C.I.A. WROTE 'WIND OF CHANGE' AS PART OF A COVERT PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATION DESIGNED TO STIR UP THE EASTERN YOUTH. YOU MUST HAVE HEARD ABOUT THIS...

Klaus: "I had no clue about the story until I was asked to do an interview earlier this year for a podcast called *Wind Of Change*. I thought it would just be another normal interview until the interviewer suddenly asked me about the CIA writing 'Wind Of Change'. My first reaction was just to laugh, because I thought he was joking. But then I realised he was actually very serious. I was shocked. Did this guy really think I was some sort of spy and that being in the Scorpions was a cover for my secret activities? It's amazing that anyone could take that seriously. There are so many conspiracy theories all over the place right now, but this has got to be one of the silliest I've ever heard. I'm sure I don't need to tell *Rock Candy Mag* readers that it's utter nonsense. Let me say in no uncertain terms that I alone wrote the song and that it has nothing to do with the CIA. Now let's move on from this fiction."

YOU GOT IT KLAUS. WERE YOU SURPRISED WHEN 'WIND OF CHANGE' BECAME SUCH A MASSIVE WORLDWIDE HIT?

Klaus: "People kept saying it could a big hit, but you're

never sure, are you? 'Wind Of Change' wasn't the first single from 'Crazy World'. We went with 'Tease Me Please Me', because we thought it was important to go with a rocker first, rather than a power ballad. But the song flopped, as did the next one, which was 'Don't Believe Her'. So we had actually had two commercial failures on our hands before 'Wind Of Change' came along."

Rudolf: "Our US record label Mercury had always wanted a rock album and they said they wanted a rock track as the first single. MTV was still backing traditional rock at that point, so the first track on the album, 'Tease Me Please Me', also became the first single, kind of a commercial rock song for the MTV format. The label thought that 'Wind Of Change' had potential, but the first two singles were always going to be rock songs. It was actually the French arm of our record label that had a lot to do with 'Wind Of Change' becoming so popular. We'd had a big hit over there with another ballad, 'Still Loving You', back in '84. Then the French label called us to ask if they could film our first show on the 'Crazy World' tour, in Belgium, and we agreed. So they filmed the show, which included us playing 'Wind Of Change', then made a video for the song out of it and released it as the first single in France. And it went to number one."

Klaus: "And even then..."

"RUDOLF ALWAYS USED A FLYING V. HE HAD SO MANY THAT YOU COULD NEVER TELL WHICH ONE HE PLAYED ON ANY ONE SONG! I DIDN'T HAVE THAT PROBLEM, BECAUSE I COULD BASICALLY RECORD THE WHOLE ALBUM WITH MY TWO EXPLORERS."
MATTHIAS JABS

"AND EVEN THEN" WHAT?

Klaus: "Jim Lewis, who was a vice president at our record company in the States, told me that the label wanted to put out 'Wind Of Change' as a single. But he said he was very concerned about the whistling on it, because he thought it would hurt sales. Jim wanted the whistling taken off, but I said no. I insisted that it should stay, because to my mind it was a vital part of what made the song work so well. In the end Jim backed down, even though he didn't agree with me."

DID A LOT OF PEOPLE OBJECT TO THE WHISTLING?

Klaus: "There were loads of objections when people first heard the song. But eventually everyone came around to my way of thinking and accepted that the whistling enhanced the tune."

Rudolf: "At first even I didn't like it. I didn't think it was a good thing for a rock band to do, but we tried something else and it just didn't work. The song only worked with the whistling. It was a really strong part of it, so that's how it stayed."

Matthias: "Jim Lewis was definitely not alone in saying, 'Nice song, but the whistling has to go.' Eventually, I played a piece of intro guitar that went along with the whistling, and they said, 'Oh, that works much better'. But even then Jim sent us a new version he'd edited himself, with the whistling taken out! We said, 'No, we want the original.'"

Klaus: "Jim had to eat a bit of humble pie when 'Wind Of Change' become a massive hit. I bumped into him somewhere or other and he got down on his knees in front of me. He said, 'I was wrong and you were right, so kick this ass for a man!' It was a very *Spinal Tap* type of moment. Jim was always very supportive of the band and he even sang gang vocals on 'Tease Me Please Me'. I was very sad to hear that he died earlier this year."

YOU EVEN RECORDED SPANISH AND RUSSIAN VERSIONS OF 'WIND OF CHANGE'...

Rudolf: "I think that was a pretty smart idea. After the song was such a big success in the States we felt we had to do something for Russia in particular. Our way of thinking was that we were part of a new generation of Germans that would be going there with guitars to make peace, rather than in tanks to make war. We wanted music to build bridges. I suggested to Klaus that it would be great if he could sing a Russian version of 'Wind Of Change', but he thought I was crazy because the language was so difficult. That's why we started off with a Spanish version, because it was a little bit easier for Klaus. In the end we got a really good Russian translation of the lyrics and Klaus gave it a go. The song turned out to be a huge hit there and because we were so popular in Russia we even ended up being invited to Moscow to meet President Gorbachev at the Kremlin in December 1991. Amazing!"

'CRAZY WORLD' CAME OUT IN NOVEMBER OF 1990, JUST BEFORE THE GRUNGE EXPLOSION. DID YOU KNOW ANYTHING OF THIS COMING FORCE AT THE TIME?

Klaus: "Not really, no. I think we were lucky that 'Crazy World' came out when it did. If it had been delayed even by just a few months I think it might not have sold anywhere near as well as it did. We were still selling loads of records then, but the downturn wasn't far away. We had a hard time in the '90s like a lot of bands. Being ►

Photos: Getty Images/Tim Rosenfelder; IconicPix/George Chin

seen as classic rock at that time was a real negative, but we managed to survive."

Matthias: "In 1991 and into '92 we were so successful with 'Crazy World' that I didn't really think about grunge. When I saw my first Nirvana video we were still on tour, playing about 100 dates at a time for something like six months in the US. Together with the crew we even took the most expensive vacation ever – 57 of us in total, down in Florida, taking a week-long break from touring!"

'Crazy World' made it to number 21 on the US *Billboard* album chart and 'Wind Of Change' went to number four on the singles chart

HOW DID YOU SURVIVE GRUNGE?

Klaus: "I think a lot of it was down to 'Wind Of Change', actually. That song was so popular that even when all the young grunge bands were dominating radio, stations still kept playing that song all the time. That gave us profile even during a tough time for traditional rock, and it really showed what one huge hit single can do for your career."

Rudolf: "I think being a worldwide band, rather than just a group that had success in the United States, really helped us to ride out the grunge thing. We'd been playing all over Europe, Asia, the Philippines, and Russia – places where other bands didn't want to go. Plus we had a good catalogue of songs that allowed us to reach wider audiences."

Matthias: "We were surprised how quickly the entire music scene changed from the established '80s rock music into grunge and alternative. The shows went from being super productions – and I agree we were part of those overproduced shows – and started moving toward the exact opposite. Bands were suddenly dressed in wood-chopper shirts and shorts and had this 'No future' kind of philosophy. I could only laugh when I saw a show by one grunge band. I can't remember who it was, but the guy sang about suicide all through the set. Then at the end of the show he said, 'See you next year!' I couldn't take it seriously. Some bands from that scene were really great and some very good songs were written in the '90s. But it's like fashion: everything comes back eventually."

'CRAZY WORLD' TURNED OUT TO BE THE LAST ALBUM YOU MADE WITH FRANCIS BUCHHOLZ. WHY DID HE LEAVE THE SCORPIONS IN 1992?

Klaus: "That was a painful experience. Francis was, and I assume still is, a great bassist. It had nothing to do with his playing and everything to do with business. I don't want to go into detail, but Francis always looked after the business side of things from a band perspective. There were never any issues. Suddenly, though, Francis started siding with a tax advisor over key issues that the rest of us felt we couldn't accept. He should have been putting the band's viewpoint to certain people, but he wasn't. I'm not prepared to say more than that. As far as I'm concerned, what happened with Francis is the darkest hour in the history of this band. I still find it painful. It was a horrible thing to have to ask him to leave after he'd been with us so long. I'd rather think about the good times we had with Francis, because he was such a big part of our success. Even though we did fall out badly with him I would never deny his contribution to the band."

Rudolf: "Francis chose to leave the band. It was his decision to go. It was a shame, but that's life."

Matthias: "Our suspicions were never proven, but we had to kick Francis out. Of course he wanted to stay, but he couldn't do that when he was on the side of this tax adviser guy. You can choose to see the situation however you want, but to leave the Scorpions at the peak of their success in favour of this tax adviser... We ended up in court and I remember the judge saying, 'Francis, a judge cannot keep a band together.' I was very disappointed. I told him not to do it and we had great talks on the phone. But then for the first time in my life I got sent a fax after one of our conversations with a memo of everything we'd talked about. When that happened I knew he was preparing for a court case. I'd studied law for three years before I joined the Scorpions, so you can't fool me that easily."

DID YOU HAVE NO INKLING THAT THESE PROBLEMS WEREN'T TOO FAR DOWN THE ROAD WHEN YOU WERE RECORDING 'CRAZY WORLD'?

Klaus: "No inkling at all. If those issues had arisen during the recording I think they would have destroyed the band. I'm not sure we'd have been able to complete the album and it could easily have split us up. They were very serious issues. Fortunately when we were recording the album all five of us were still on the same page and were getting along very well. We were on such a high when we finished 'Crazy World', because we knew it was a special record. It was only later on that things came to light, which caused this terrible rift."

YOU WENT ON TO RELEASE YOUR FIRST ALBUM WITHOUT FRANCIS, 'FACE THE HEAT', IN 1993, WITH RALPH RIECKERMANN ON BASS.

Rudolf: "And Bruce Fairbairn produced it. We tried to change a little bit on that one, but then when we did the

Photo: Getty Images/Harry Langdon

'Eye II Eye' album in '99 even I admit that we went too far. At that point I realised that we had to stick to our guns. I told the guys that classic rock would come back – and it did. Our love for that kind of music was too strong to simply stop making it. And we still have the same passion for rock music today, which is why we're making a brand new album right now."

Klaus: "I'm not going to pretend that we had it easy, but we kept going and when things began to turn our way again early in the 21st century we were ready. We came back strongly with the 'Unbreakable' album in 2004, then with 'Sting In The Tail' in 2010 and 'Return To Forever' five years ago. Those albums were all in the classic Scorpions style and they proved that we still had it in us to make good records. It amuses me that we and bands like us were being told all the time in the '90s that nobody wanted our sort of rock any more. We were told that it was out of date and the grunge bands were now in charge. Well here we are in 2020, still releasing new music and still playing to huge crowds whenever we tour. And most of those grunge bands who were supposed to have made us obsolete nearly 30 years ago... well, where are they now?"

MANY PEOPLE SAY 'CRAZY WORLD' IS THE LAST TRULY CLASSIC SCORPIONS ALBUM. DO YOU AGREE?

Klaus: "I think it is a classic and any Scorpions fan would agree. It's the last album from what I'd say was our golden period. We've done seven studio albums since and they've all got good moments on them. We worked with Keith Olsen again on 'Pure Instinct' in 1996 and that was a decent record. But if I'm honest nothing we've done in the past three decades matches 'Crazy World'. It still sounds great too, which to my mind proves we were right to go to Wisseloord. Had we stayed in LA then I doubt it would have come out as well as it did. It went to number one in Germany, which is the only Scorpions album to do that. I feel so blessed to have been able to work on such a fantastic album."

Matthias: "'Crazy World' is definitely a classic Scorpions album, but we later fought our way back to our sound with 'Unbreakable'. I also think 'Sting In The Tail' is a classic Scorpions album, with great songs. The albums in-between, you know, they're not all the strongest. But it's difficult for bands who've been together more than 50 years to keep coming up with new music, where everybody goes, 'Wow, that's as good as something from 1984!' The chances of that happening aren't great. But we try hard every single time and there's always some good stuff on there."

Rudolf: "'Crazy World' is a fantastic album that allowed us to do two huge US tours and spend a year and a half on the road. If I had to choose I'd say that 'Love At First Sting' and 'Crazy World' are the two album highpoints of our entire career."

Matthias: "As I speak to you now from Peppermint Park Studios in Hanover, the guitars, the amps, and the cabinets from the 'Crazy World' recordings are here with me in the same room! We're recording songs for our 19th album and our producer Greg Fidelman wanted to bring back all the equipment we used on 'Blackout', 'Love At First Sting' and 'Crazy World'. Luckily we'd kept all that stuff in our warehouse – even the old cabinets. Everything has been serviced up in Denmark and we got it back last week. I can't wait to fire them up and see how they sound!"

SCORPIONS – CRAZY WORLD

Recorded: 1990
Released: 6 November 1990

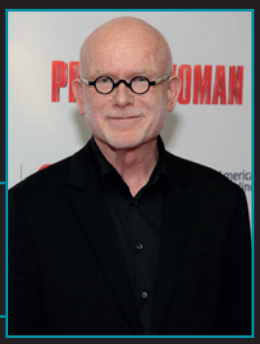
LINE UP:
Klaus Meine – lead vocals
Rudolf Schenker – rhythm guitar, backing vocals, lead guitar on 'Wind Of Change' and 'Send Me An Angel'
Matthias Jabs – lead guitar, backing vocals, rhythm guitar on 'Wind Of Change' and 'Send Me An Angel'.
Francis Buchholz – bass, backing vocals
Herman Rarebell – drums, backing vocals

Produced, engineered and mixed by Keith Olsen
Engineered and mixed by Erwin Musper
Additional engineering and mixing by Shay Baby
Assistant engineers: Attie Bauw, Albert Boekholt, Tom Fletcher
Mastered by Greg Fulginiti
Recorded at: Goodnight LA Studios, Los Angeles, USA; Wisseloord Studios, Hilversum, Holland

TRACK LISTING
Tease Me Please Me (Music by Matthias Jabs and Jim Vallance. Words by Klaus Meine, Herman Rarebell, and Jim Vallance)
Don't Believe Her (Music by Rudolf Schenker and Jim Vallance. Words by Klaus Meine, Herman Rarebell, and Jim Vallance)
To Be With You In Heaven (Music by Rudolf Schenker. Words by Klaus Meine)
Wind Of Change (Music and words by Klaus Meine)
Restless Nights (Music by Rudolf Schenker. Words by Klaus Meine, Herman Rarebell, and Jim Vallance)
Lust or Love (Music by Klaus Meine. Words by Klaus Meine, Herman Rarebell, and Jim Vallance)
Kicks After Six (Music by Francis Buchholz and Jim Vallance. Words by Klaus Meine, Herman Rarebell, and Jim Vallance)
Money And Fame (Music by Matthias Jabs. Words by Matthias Jabs and Herman Rarebell)
Crazy World (Music by Rudolf Schenker. Words by Klaus Meine, Herman Rarebell, Rudolf Schenker, and Jim Vallance)
Send Me An Angel (Music by Rudolf Schenker. Words by Klaus Meine)

"I PLAYED KEYS ON 'WIND OF CHANGE'!"

Songwriter **Jim Vallance** (right) was heavily involved in the writing process for 'Crazy World'. But he was also the **Scorpions**' secret weapon on their biggest hit…



JIM VALLANCE WAS *one of the most acclaimed and in-demand rock songwriters of the '80s and '90s. He collaborated with high profile names including Bryan Adams, Aerosmith, Alice Cooper, and Kiss on some of their most successful moments. So it was no surprise when the Canadian was asked to work with the Scorpions, writing material for the 'Crazy World' album. In the end he earned credits on no less than seven of the 11 tracks on the release and as he explains, working with the Germans proved to be a very positive experience for him.*

Klaus and Rudolf: "I liked the fact that they had strong pop-rock sensibilities and understood the value of a powerful melody"

HOW DID YOU GET THE JOB OF WORKING WITH THE SCORPIONS?

"I'm sure the offer came from Bruce Fairbairn. We were old friends after being in bands together when we were younger, so Bruce got me in to write with Aerosmith on their 'Permanent Vacation' album that he was producing in 1987, then he did the same again when he started on the Scorpions project. As many people know, Bruce then bailed on the Scorpions to go produce AC/DC. I thought that was cheeky. Bruce had obviously decided that AC/DC were bigger than the Scorpions, so he wasn't going to stick around. To be honest, I didn't think that was a decent way to act."

KLAUS MEINE BELIEVES IT WAS KEITH OLSEN WHO RECOMMENDED YOU, AND NOT BRUCE.

"No, that wasn't what happened. I'm sure Bruce was still going to produce the album when I was brought in. That would make sense because of our shared history. So sorry, but Klaus is wrong on that."

DID YOU LIKE THE SCORPIONS?

"I wasn't the sort of person who knew their album deep cuts, but I was certainly aware of their hits and had no doubts about the band's musical quality. I could never work with anyone below a certain standard – and they were a high grade band."

HOW DID YOU FIRST GET TOGETHER?

"They came to my home studio in Vancouver. There was a lot of material that was already some way down the line, but my opinion of what they had varied from song to song. The first number we worked on was what became 'Tease Me Please Me'. It had a different title and chorus back then and I told

them that while I thought the verses were very strong the chorus still needed a lot of work. They agreed. I liked the fact that they had strong pop-rock sensibilities and understood the value of a powerful melody, even though as a band they were on the heavy side. My aim was to come up with songs that would be played on the radio without losing that essential Scorpions style. I helped out quite a lot on the lyrical side of things too. Their English was already very good, but what I could do was add just a little finesse here and there."

"I could never work with anyone below a certain standard – and the Scorpions were a high grade band"

"THE FIRST NUMBER WE WORKED ON WAS WHAT BECAME 'TEASE ME PLEASE ME'. IT HAD A DIFFERENT TITLE AND CHORUS BACK THEN AND I TOLD THEM THAT WHILE I THOUGHT THE VERSES WERE VERY STRONG THE CHORUS STILL NEEDED A LOT OF WORK. THEY AGREED"

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO WRITE IN THE BASEMENT OF YOUR HOUSE?

"They'd shipped their equipment to Vancouver to record with Bruce at Little Mountain. Since they'd already moved to the city and were staying in a hotel ahead of the recording sessions it made sense to work with them at my own studio. It wasn't a deal breaker as far as I was concerned if they turned down the idea. But I always point out to any musicians I work with that I have the facilities at my place, so why not take advantage of that? They were happy to do it."

HOW LONG DID THE WRITING PROCESS TAKE AND HOW DID YOU GET ALONG WITH THE GUYS?

"I think we had about a month altogether, maybe in two sessions each of two weeks. We'd bat ideas back and forth without egos getting in the way. They'd listen to what I had to say and agree to any suggestions I made that improved things, while I would grant them the same courtesy. All that mattered was that we came up with the best possible songs."

WAS IT ALWAYS THE PLAN TO COME UP WITH NEW MATERIAL DURING THESE SESSIONS?

"I've heard the band say that three songs were developed from scratch, including 'Tease Me Please Me', but that wasn't a new song. I suppose they may now *think* it was a new one, because the title was changed and I came up with a different chorus. But as far as I'm concerned nothing was developed from scratch. If the band say there are two other songs that were totally created through our collaboration and never existed before, then I'll take their word for it. Their memory is probably better than mine after all these years."

DID YOU RECORD DEMOS OF WHAT YOU WERE WORKING ON?

"Yes, we did new demos of everything and they would've been recorded at my home studio. I imagine those tapes would've been Keith's introduction to the songs prior to taking over as producer."

DID YOU GO TO THE STUDIO DOWN IN L.A. WHEN THEY STARTED RECORDING?

"I did go to Goodnight LA with the band, but not to interfere, just to hang out and see how it was all progressing."

YOU GOT A CREDIT FOR PLAYING KEYBOARDS ON 'SEND ME AN ANGEL', DIDN'T YOU?

"I did. I played keyboards and a bit of guitar on the demos we did at my studio. Keith heard what I'd done and liked it, so he asked me to play the part on the album. But do you know that I'm also playing keyboards on 'Wind Of Change'?"

WHAT?!

"Yes, really! I'm not credited, but I guarantee that it's me playing keyboards on that track – and because I've never been credited I'm actually owed some money. To get the money released I needed Keith as producer to confirm my status as a session musician on 'Wind Of Change'. I emailed him earlier this year to sort it out, and he said he'd take care of it. But sadly Keith died [on 9 March] before he was able to do anything about it. Oh well..."

MAYBE YOU'LL SEE SOME CASH ONE DAY. TELL US, HOW DO YOU FEEL THE 'CRAZY WORLD' ALBUM TURNED OUT IN THE END?

"I thought it was really good. There have been albums where I've listened to what was done with my songs and was very unhappy, but not on 'Crazy World'. It's one of the best Scorpions albums and I'm very proud to have been associated with it."

WERE YOU SURPRISED NOT TO BE ASKED TO WORK WITH THE BAND ON ANY FUTURE ALBUMS?

"I *was* asked to write with them for their next album, 'Face The Heat'. But at that time I was committed to working with another band. The Scorpions only had a small window of time to get the songs done and for me to get involved would have meant letting the other band down. So reluctantly I had to say no to the Scorpions. But I have nothing but the happiest memories of 'Crazy World'."

Interview by Malcolm Dome. Photos: Getty Images/Walter McBride; IconicPix/Ray Palmer Archive

INSIDE STORY

KNIGHT SONGS

She was the composer of a flurry of huge American hits in the ’80s and ’90s, helping the likes of Pat Benatar, Kiss, and Aerosmith dominate the airwaves. *Howard Johnson* talks to industry insider **Holly Knight** about the art of rock songwriting and how to touch millions of people with your music...

IF YOU’RE A FAN of ’80s US radio rock then chances are you’re a fan of Holly Knight – even if you don’t know it. The classically-trained New York songwriter and keyboardist may not be as famous as many of her clients, but the careers of Kiss, Aerosmith, Pat Benatar, Bon Jovi, and Heart among many others have all benefited from Knight’s innate inability to create tunes that added sparkle, infectiousness and, most importantly, millions of sales to an artist’s canon. After beginning her career in the early ’80s in New York band Spider, a chance meeting with super-producer Mike Chapman eventually led to a change in direction and a shift to producing mega-selling songs for other artists.

“Songwriting is a whole different ball game to playing in a band,” she says. “You may be a great musician, but that doesn’t make you a great songwriter – and that’s OK. You wouldn’t tell Tom Cruise he has to be a brilliant screenwriter just because he’s a great actor.”

Pat Benatar and Tina Turner have both won Grammys for their recordings of songs Knight had a hand in, and in 2013 her accomplishments were recognised when she was inducted into the prestigious Songwriters Hall Of Fame.

Now with a lifetime of experience right at the heart of the world of rock behind her, Knight is still passionate about making music and was only too happy to sit down for a mammoth three hours to discuss her life, her storied career, and her special relationship with some of music’s biggest names...

> “JON BON JOVI SAID, ‘HOW COME WE’RE NOT WRITING TOGETHER?’ HE CAME OVER TO MY HOUSE THE NEXT DAY AND WE WROTE THE SONG ‘STICK TO YOUR GUNS’ THAT ENDED UP ON THE ‘NEW JERSEY’ ALBUM. THOSE KIND OF THINGS HAPPENED ALL THE TIME IN THE ’80S.”

I READ SOMEWHERE THAT YOU SAY MUSIC WAS YOUR FIRST LANGUAGE...

“Because it’s always been there for as long as I can remember. My mum was desperate for me to play piano and luckily for her I loved it from the start. Most parents have to bribe their kids to play, but I’d get up before kindergarten and practise. I’d spend hours at the keyboard and loved taking lessons. But when my mum discovered that I was good at it she became a little obsessive about wanting me to become a concert pianist.”

AND YOU ENDED UP STUDYING AT THE PRESTIGIOUS MANNES SCHOOL OF MUSIC IN NEW YORK...

“Mannes was kind of like the boutique version of the famous Juilliard School Of Music that everyone knows about. Juilliard was fairly straight-laced, whereas Mannes had more of a *Harry Potter* feel to it. You needed money to go there and I was lucky because my dad was a doctor. The kids who were accepted were looking to be concert pianists and I studied classical for 14 years. But I also discovered rock’n’roll...”

Photo: Getty Images/Aaron Rapoport/Corbis

INSIDE STORY

Holly's first band Spider photographed at the Uptown Theater, Chicago, 6 August 1981. L-R: Holly Knight (keyboards), Anton Fig (drums), Keith Lentin (guitar), Amanda Blue (vocals), Jim Lowell (bass)

AND THAT WAS YOUR DOWNFALL, RIGHT?!
"Ha, probably! I was about eight when I first found rock music and it was definitely a game changer. I suddenly became aware of radio and started hearing all this varied stuff, from The Supremes to The Beatles and all points in-between."

EVERYBODY FROM THAT ERA STARTED WITH THE BEATLES...
"All those girls fainting and thinking they were sexy. But I never thought The Beatles were sexy. The Stones were sexy, because they had attitude. For me the school of rock was the Stones and The Doors. My favourite classical composer was Chopin. He was The Prince Of Darkness, all moody and minor chords. I saw Jim Morrison the same way and that was the path I followed."

SO DID CLASSICAL MUSIC IMMEDIATELY FALL BY THE WAYSIDE?
"I was still studying classical piano, but I was just going through the motions, really, because by then all I wanted was to be in a band and be a rock star. I got lazy with the practising and became very rebellious. I was more interested in sneaking out late at night to go to clubs and drop LSD. And I wanted to be up on stage *so* bad."

WHAT BANDS WERE YOU GOING TO SEE?
"The first gig was Neil Young at Carnegie Hall, around 1969/70. But I saw a lot of great acts, like Frank Zappa And The Mothers of Invention and Jimi Hendrix. I started getting into much harder rock like The Who and Zeppelin, but at the same time I had very eclectic taste. I listened to The Carpenters and The Mamas And The Papas, Joni Mitchell, Crosby Stills Nash And Young, Pink Floyd..."

> "I'D STARTED TO REALISE I WAS PRETTY GOOD AT WRITING SONGS WHEN THE LABEL KEPT PICKING *MY* TUNES AS THE SINGLES. THE BAND DIDN'T LIKE THAT, BUT I TOLD THEM, 'YOU SHOULD JUST BE HAPPY WE'RE GETTING ON THE RADIO.'"

AND THEN YOU RAN AWAY FROM HOME...
"I did. When I was 15 I fell in love with a guy who was 20 and ran away with him, but I think it was also a bit of a 'f*ck you' to my mum, because aside from the music it felt like nothing I did was ever good enough for her. I did turn 16 a month after, by the way, in case you're horrified! Plus women are more mature than men at any age! My boyfriend and I had this idea of putting a band together, but I was way more driven than him and we never got out of the bedroom. We spent time in California, Spokane in Washington, and Seattle before we finally ended up in Boston, living hand to mouth, pretty much homeless. We squatted in an abandoned house, siphoning off the electricity from the neighbours. I'd reached an all time low. So I went back to New York, split up with the guy, and started to get really focused on getting into a band."

AND HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT THAT?
"I became very organised and learned how to network. I'd buy cheap tickets for gigs right up in the nosebleed seats and when the bouncers were flirting with the groupies I'd sneak through the backstage door. I got to meet a lot of interesting people that way. I'd go to parties and I was always on the lookout for the right contacts..."

"You may be a great musician, but that doesn't make you a great songwriter"

AND EVENTUALLY YOU FOUND THEM...

"I met [guitarist] Keith [Lentin] and [drummer] Anton [Fig] on the very same night at a club called The Bitter End. I was friends with a guy called Howie Wyeth, who'd played drums on Bob Dylan's 'Desire' album alongside a guy called Rob Stoner playing bass. Anton and Keith had also played with Rob, so there was a connection. Howie knew these guys were getting a band together and said 'Holly is a great keyboard player. You should have her join your band.' I went home and got a call around midnight the next night to go down and jam with the guys at their loft in Tribeca. It was an industrial area at the time so you could make noise all night. We jammed and had fun and I fell asleep on the couch. When I woke up they asked me to join the band."

AND THAT BAND WAS SPIDER...

"They weren't quite a band yet. There wasn't a name at the time and there wasn't a bassist, so I brought Jim Lowell in from another group called Riff Raff. Anton and Keith were both South African and Keith was married to another South African called Amanda, who became our singer. It came together very quickly. We rehearsed for a couple of months, decided to call ourselves Siren and then started gigging playing only originals at places like CBGBs, Max's Kansas City, and Great Gildersleeves. There was another club, a very cool, trendy place called Trax that was just two blocks from where I was living, and we became the house band there for a while."

Holly wrote the huge hit 'Never' for Heart sisters Ann and Nancy Wilson

WERE YOU WRITING SONGS AT THIS POINT?

"When I first joined the band they had some material that was kind of prog rock with lyrics that made no sense. It was kinda lame, really, not that good. So I decided to have a go at writing because I thought it couldn't be any worse than what they were doing!"

SO HOW DID THE BAND CATCH A BREAK?

"Anton and Keith were friendly with [well-known producer] Eddie Kramer, who was also South African. Eddie was producing [Kiss guitarist] Ace Frehley's solo album at the time [in 1978] and early on in the process he heard a tape of Anton playing on a track that was being considered for the album. Ace didn't like the song, but thought the drummer was terrific and wanted him for his solo album. So Anton ended up playing drums on Ace's record and they got along so well that they became drinking buddies. Now by this time Anton and I were an item, so when Ace and Anton would go out I'd tag along as Anton's girlfriend. Ace ended up telling Kiss about Anton and when they were having some drumming issues Anton ended up playing – uncredited – on the 'Dynasty' and 'Unmasked' albums. So through Anton's Kiss connection [the band's manager] Bill Aucoin heard about Siren and came to see us play at Trax. We were looking for a manager, he fell in love with us and took us on."

THERE'S A STORY THAT YOU PLAYED KEYBOARDS ON 'UNMASKED'. WHAT HAPPENED?

"So I met the guys from Kiss through Anton and I knew that they recorded at The Record Plant. It was a cool place to hang, because rock stars were always coming in and out. I was there one evening meeting a friend for dinner when Gene Simmons suddenly walked out of Studio A. He said to me, 'Holly, you're a keyboard player, right? Can you come and play on a track that we're working on?' So of course I said yes, went straight in, and started tinkering around with the keyboard in the big studio room. Then I played through a song called 'Shandi' and afterwards I saw them huddling together in deep conversation. Gene said, 'We love what you did so much, how would you like to put keys on the whole album?' It was the first real record I'd ever played on, but I didn't tell them that. Because of Anton's situation I knew that Kiss never gave credits to people who performed on their records, so when they paid me for 'Unmasked' I Xeroxed the cheque as proof. I've still got that copy!"

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A THRILL...

"Well I wasn't a crazy Kiss fan. I thought they put on an amazing live show, but I was probably too much of a musical snob at the time to be really into them the way everyone else was. I ended up dating Paul for a while later on, and I think it always riled him that I wasn't a ►

Photos: Getty Images/Paul Natkin; Getty Images/Walt Disney Television

INSIDE STORY

Kiss worshipper. Since then I've come to appreciate how hard they work at what they do, and have written four songs with Paul that they recorded."

HOW DID SIREN GET A DEAL WITH DREAMLAND?
"It all came about through us looking for a producer. Eddie Kramer was interested because of the Anton connection, and Jack Douglas, who'd worked with Aerosmith, was also in the frame. An engineer friend of mine who'd worked with Mike Chapman told me about him and said I should check him out because he'd produced 'Parallel Lines' for Blondie in '78 and really knew about songs. [Chapman had originally made his name in a partnership with Nicky Chinn that produced many UK hits for the likes of The Sweet and Suzi Quatro.] He'd also produced Nick Gilder's 'Hot Child In The City' and 'My Sharona' for The Knack [both of which were US number ones], so he had a great track record. The problem was that Bill Aucoin was always focused on Kiss and it was hard to get his attention, so even though I asked him to find Mike Chapman, it never happened."

SO OF COURSE YOU FELL BACK ON YOUR BURGEONING KNACK FOR HUSTLING...
"I snuck into a private party for [Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards' offshoot band] The New Barbarians at Trax. I was talking to a couple of guys from The Knack when this Australian guy who looked like Crocodile Dundee came up. They introduced him as 'Mike' and he said hello and chatted for a few minutes before going off to the bar. It was only after one of the guys told me that 'Mike' was the guy who'd produced their record that I realised it was Mike Chapman! I had a tape with me and ran after Mike, told him I had a band and asked him if he'd listen to our tape. Mike said he would listen, but he was working with Blondie and was very busy. He gave me a number and told me to be persistent, which of course I was. I called the studio where he was working every day for two weeks. Mike finally called me back and said he was leaving town, but promised he'd listen to the Siren tape on the plane. Eight hours later Mike called me and said 'I've listened to the tape three times. I love your band. I have a label I'm starting and I want to sign you to it.' I was over the moon."

Holly together with Scandal singer Patty Smyth in the '80s

BUT MIKE CHAPMAN DIDN'T PRODUCE THE FIRST ALBUM, 1980'S 'SPIDER', DID HE?
"He didn't. We changed the band name to Spider because there was already another band called Siren. But Mike passed the project over to his engineer Peter Coleman, which wasn't what I'd been working for at all. But I couldn't complain, because we had a Top 40 hit with a song I wrote called 'New Romance (It's A Mystery)'.

A TOP 40 HIT STRAIGHT OUT OF THE BOX. DID YOU THINK, 'THIS SONGWRITING THING IS EASY!'?
"At the time I thought we'd paid some dues, but in retrospect it was really quick. It only took a year to get a deal. Bill Aucoin had decided at the outset that we should split everything equally, and I was pressured into agreeing, stupidly thinking I'd get thrown out of the band if I didn't. But by that point I'd started to realise I was pretty good at writing songs when the label kept picking *my* tunes as the singles. The band didn't like that, but I told them, 'You should just be happy we're getting on the radio.' I'd started off writing with the others, but it was clear that I was the secret weapon. Mike Chapman told me he liked the rest of the band, but it was my songs that had made him want to sign the group in the first place. So by the time the second record came around relations within the group were kinda rough. Especially because were like the CBGBs version of Fleetwood Mac, what with all the inter-band relationships."

IN 1981 YOU RECORDED THE SECOND SPIDER ALBUM, 'BETWEEN THE LINES', AGAIN WITH PETER COLEMAN. BUT THERE WAS ONE SONG INCLUDED, 'BETTER BE GOOD TO ME', THAT WAS PRODUCED BY MIKE CHAPMAN...
"I went to Mike and asked him if he would write a song with me for the second album. I thought if I could talk him into writing with me then I could talk him into producing the track as well. He was totally into the idea. I met up with him at the Dreamland offices and we wrote 'Better Be Good To Me'. I brought it back to the band and they loved the song, but Amanda couldn't deal with the fact that I'd gone outside the group to write it. While we were on tour things deteriorated and I ended up leaving at the end of that run of dates."

SO WHAT DID YOU DO NEXT?
"I went and told Mike Chapman that I was leaving the band, which was difficult because he'd put a lot of money into Spider. But he was incredibly supportive and basically told me that I should move to California, that he'd sign me to a new publishing deal, that he'd find me people to write with, and that he'd write with me himself. I think we'd both felt some mad chemistry when we wrote 'Better Be Good To Me' together and he said he had a bunch of albums lined up and that if I came up with something great then I'd have a direct line to get my songs out."

ONE OF YOUR FIRST SONGS TO BE RECORDED BY SOMEONE ELSE WAS 'CHANGE', WHICH WAS ON JOHN WAITE'S FIRST SOLO ALBUM, 'IGNITION', IN 1982.
"And that's one of the few songs where I think the artist's version is better than the original [that Holly recorded with Spider]. John changed a few of the lyrics around

and I think [album producer] Neil Geraldo did a fantastic job producing the track. It got played to death on MTV, which was a big thing for me."

Holly being inducted into the Songwriters Hall Of Fame in 2013

SO DID YOU FOLLOW MIKE CHAPMAN'S ADVICE AND MOVE TO CALIFORNIA?
"I did. I thought I'd try it for a while, so I signed a publishing deal for $12,000, which was certainly more money than I'd ever seen before. And almost as soon as I moved out everything started to fall into place. The very first day I went to Mike's house he took a phone call and started chatting away, saying to the person on the end of the line that he had this great new writing partner called Holly. Then he said, 'Yes, we'll write you a hit no problem,' as if it was the easiest thing in the world. When he hung up I asked Mike who he'd been talking to. He told me it was Pat Benatar – and we went on to write 'Love Is A Battlefield' that same day! Mike played guitar, I played keyboards and we used a Roland drum machine. I remember Mike telling me that what we had was very catchy, but he felt we needed a title that was a bit outside the box and messed up, 'something like 'Love Is A Battlefield', but not that.' I immediately said 'It's great, I love it.' And that was it. What was really weird was that it usually takes months after a song has been completed to it actually coming out. With that one it was like boom! It came out really quickly, got played on the radio everywhere, and just exploded!"

AS DID YOUR CAREER...
"It did. I was 26 years old, and then I heard that Tina Turner was going to cut the song I wrote with Mike for Spider, 'Better Be Good To Me'. Even though nobody had any idea that Tina would become the biggest star on the planet with the 'Private Dancer' album, I did say to myself, 'f*ck. I'm going to make some money as a songwriter.'"

'BETTER BE GOOD TO ME' WAS EVEN CHOSEN AS A SINGLE...
"I was amazed when I heard that it was going to be the second single from the album. Even back then it was hard to put a rock song out as a single."

WHY DO YOU THINK YOUR SONG TOUCHED A CHORD WITH TINA?
"Because I was feisty and I was strong, and Tina wanted to sing those kind of lyrics. I didn't *deliberately* set out to write strong and empowering songs, but that's what came out. Plus I was really the only woman in the rock songwriting elite in LA."

DID THAT DRAW OTHER WOMEN OPERATING IN THE SAME ARENA TO YOU?
"I think so. Patty Smyth recorded 'The Warrior' [a song Holly wrote with Nick Gilder] with Scandal, and Pat Benatar then recorded 'Invincible'. Then one day I got a call from Heart's management and I ended up writing 'Never' for what turned out to be their big comeback album 'Heart'."

YOU WERE FAST BECOMING THE 'GO TO' PERSON FOR RECORD COMPANIES LOOKING TO ADD A LITTLE HIT-MAKING FAIRY DUST TO THEIR ROCK BANDS. WAS THAT NOT AWKWARD FOR YOU WHEN IT WAS OBVIOUS RECORD COMPANIES WERE REALLY TELLING THEIR BANDS THEY COULDN'T DO IT ON THEIR OWN?
"There was definitely some of that, because a lot of bands didn't want to draw attention to the fact that they were using outside writers. They thought it made them look weak, and of course they also resented the income they lost from having other writers on their records. In fact, at one point I had to get my lawyer to call MTV and gently ask them to stop doing quite so many news stories on me mentioning all the songs I'd written that were hits for all these groups. I was worried that the bands would be pissed off and that I'd be biting the hand that feeds. Heart were probably the exception to the rule, actually. They even mentioned my name in their band biographies and would sometimes ask me to go and do radio interviews with them. They were very generous that way."

"A LOT OF BANDS DIDN'T WANT TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT THEY WERE USING OUTSIDE WRITERS. THEY THOUGHT IT MADE THEM LOOK WEAK, AND OF COURSE THEY ALSO RESENTED THE INCOME THEY LOST FROM HAVING OTHER WRITERS ON THEIR RECORDS."

HOW DID IT GO WITH AEROSMITH, WHO WERE VERY MUCH IN THE LAST CHANCE SALOON, COMMERCIALLY, WHEN YOU HOOKED UP WITH THEM IN 1986?
"I just called out the elephant in the room. You're right that everyone thought Aerosmith were over when I got a call from [Geffen Records A&R man] John Kalodner. John said to me, 'They've written this song and I think it's good, but not great. It could be a big hit, but it isn't right now. Would you mind having a listen and seeing what you could do?' The first thing I said to John was, 'How does the band feel about me getting involved?' He told me that they were fine with the idea and that Steven [Tyler] would call me the following day, which he did..." ►

Photo: Getty Images/Theo Wargo

INSIDE STORY

"THE '80S WAS A GREAT TIME TO BE WRITING SONGS. AS WRITERS WE COULD SELL MILLIONS OF RECORDS AND OUR NAMES HAD TO BE ON THE PACKAGING. THAT MEANT WE ALL HAD A FANTASTIC CALLING CARD. WITH STREAMING THAT'S NO LONGER THE CASE."

AND HOW DID THAT WORK OUT?
"The first thing I said to Steven was that I was a huge fan and that I didn't want to change anything without his blessing. Then I said I'd listened to the song and that I didn't think it needed all that much work, just a couple of changes and some tightening up here and there. Steven couldn't have been more open. He said, 'I think it could be better too. I'd like to see what you come up with.' From that moment on we got on like a house on fire and the result was 'Rag Doll', which ended up being a huge hit from the 'Permanent Vacation' album. I love Steven. What woman doesn't?"

TELL US HOW YOU GOT WORK WITH JON BON JOVI ON THE 'NEW JERSEY' ALBUM...
"At the time I was friends with [Ozzy Osbourne bassist] Phil Soussan. One day we decided to go to [famous LA rock'n'roll bar and restaurant] The Rainbow. When we walked in Jon Bon Jovi was sitting there surrounded by women and holding court. Now of course I was very interested in meeting Jon, and Phil knew him. So we went over and Phil introduced me. Jon looked at me, immediately told all the girls to leave, and asked me to sit next to him. He put his arm around my shoulder – not sexually, more like a buddy – and said, 'How come we're not writing together?' Jon came over to my house the next day and we wrote the song 'Stick To Your Guns' that ended up on the 'New Jersey' album. Those kind of things happened all the time in the '80s."

YOU WERE WORKING CLOSELY WITH A LOT OF BIG ROCK STARS WITH OVERSIZED EGOS AND OVERSIZED LIBIDOS AT A TIME WHEN #METOO HAD NEVER BEEN HEARD OF. DID YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES BEING A WOMAN IN THE HIGHLY SEXED MID-'80S?
"I think it's vitally important that any women who experience any kind of sexual harassment are taken seriously and validated. But I was lucky in that nobody tried that sh*t with me. Well, there was the one time that a guy tried something insulting and I just cut him immediately. Maybe I created a vibe where people didn't try it, because I'd kick their ass before they laid a finger on me. It was a male-dominated world, but any time I walked into a room all I had to do was sit down and whip out some Schubert or Beethoven and the guys went, 'Right, she can play.' I was treated with respect because of it. The male/female thing didn't come into play at that point and generally it hasn't. In a way I feel bad saying that, because it's a legitimate beef for a lot of women who went through hell. But you know, while Kiss bragged about f*cking 2000 women, those women wanted to sleep with them. That was consenting, which is quite different."

MUSICALLY SPEAKING, HAS ANYONE EVER ACCUSED YOU OF WRITING FORMULAIC STUFF DURING THAT ERA SIMPLY TO SELL OODLES OF RECORDS?
"Unless I've been reading the wrong articles I've never been accused of that. If anything I think I was known for colouring outside the lines. I will admit that there were times when my publishing deal dictated that I had to write X amount of songs a year, and sometimes I'd get toward the end of the year and have to write some songs really quickly. I wrote them for the wrong reasons and they always ended up being among the worst things I ever wrote. Those are songs you will never hear. I pride myself on not being part of the system, which is why I feel such distaste for things like *American Idol*. And if you look at what's going on these days, you see that cabal of writers from Scandinavia who write for absolutely everyone from Pink to Taylor Swift to Ariana Grande to Katy Perry. To my mind if you need half a dozen collaborators to come up with a song then you shouldn't call yourself a songwriter. Maybe you're an engineer or a producer, but you're not a songwriter."

WHY DO YOU THINK YOUR TUNES HAVE STRUCK A CHORD WITH SO MANY PEOPLE?
"I think the adversities I went through early in life were really important. Without adversity you have no reason to become better, no reason to rise above. Lots of my big songs are about overcoming things and fighting. 'Invincible', 'The Warrior', 'Love Is A Battlefield'. Fighting *for* something rather than fighting with someone, you know? And yeah, there's a little bit of that 'f*ck you' attitude in there, which is great for rock'n'roll."

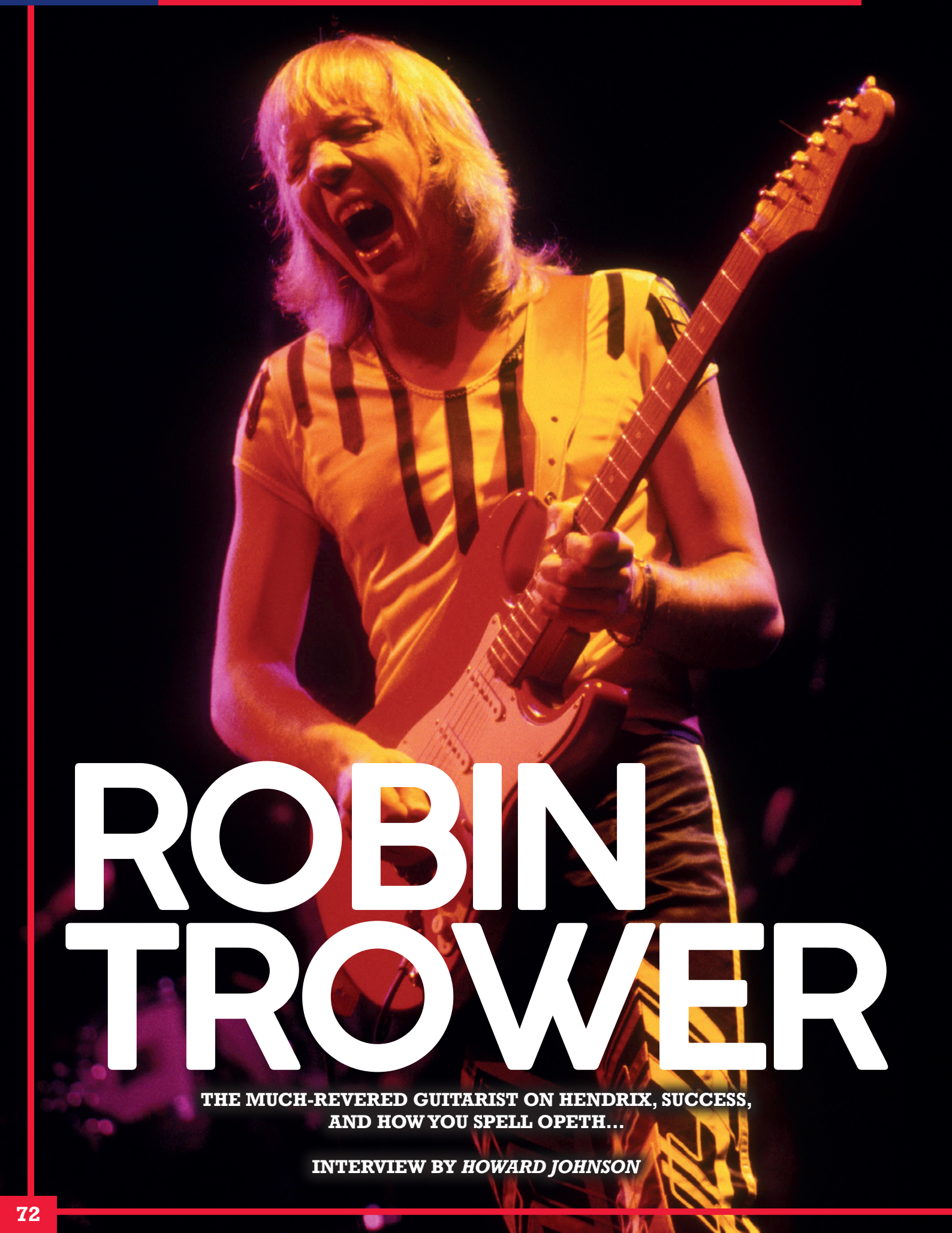
HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL WHEN SOMETHING YOU CREATED HAS TOUCHED SO MANY LIVES?
"It feels amazing, but I don't let it go to my head. I can't be an asshole around my friends just because I wrote some big songs. When I wrote 'The Best' with Mike Chapman [which went on to be a huge hit for Tina Turner], we didn't say 'let's write this epic song that's going to change the world.' We just sat down to write a great song and it happened to tap into a collective psyche. When that happens it's like a gift from the gods. That song is the epitome of a feel-good song – and I think we need songs like that more than ever these days."

YOU CLEARLY STILL HAVE GREAT PASSION FOR MAKING MUSIC AND ARE CURRENTLY BUSY PROVIDING SONGS FOR TV AND MUSICALS. YOU'RE ALSO WORKING ON A FILM OF YOUR LIFE USING YOUR SONGS TO UNDERPIN THE NARRATIVE, AS WELL AS WRITING YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY. ARE YOU SURPRISED THAT YOU'RE STILL SO MOTIVATED?
"Well I don't have to do this any more, for sure, but I'm passionate about everything I do. I can't help but be creative, because it's just who I am. But the industry has changed. I may be in the Songwriters Hall Of Fame, but it's hard even for me to get to the writers I want to work with. I'd love to write with Adele and I know we'd write a huge hit together, but I can't seem to get through her gatekeepers. That sucks."

SO WHAT'S THE SECRET OF YOUR SUCCESS, HOLLY?
"You have to write lyrics that speak to people. When I started writing lyrics I focused on melody, not musicality, and that was important. Music oozes out of a lot of people, but it's hard to write lyrics that are compelling and catchy. I also found it important to write on bass or guitar as well as keyboards. That way I'd naturally put more emphasis on the words and melody, because I don't play those instruments that well. Songs like 'Obsession' [a big hit for Animotion in 1984] and 'Better Be Good To Me' are just two chords, but you'd never know it because of the inversions and clever production.

"I think what's also important is that it was never about the money. I would have done it for free, though I'm glad I didn't have to. Plus the '80s was a great time to be writing songs. As writers we could sell millions of records and our names had to be on the packaging. That meant we all had a fantastic calling card. With streaming that's no longer the case. I still get big cheques, but I feel bad for new songwriters, because people now think music should be free – and that makes it really hard for them."

Photo: Matthew Beard



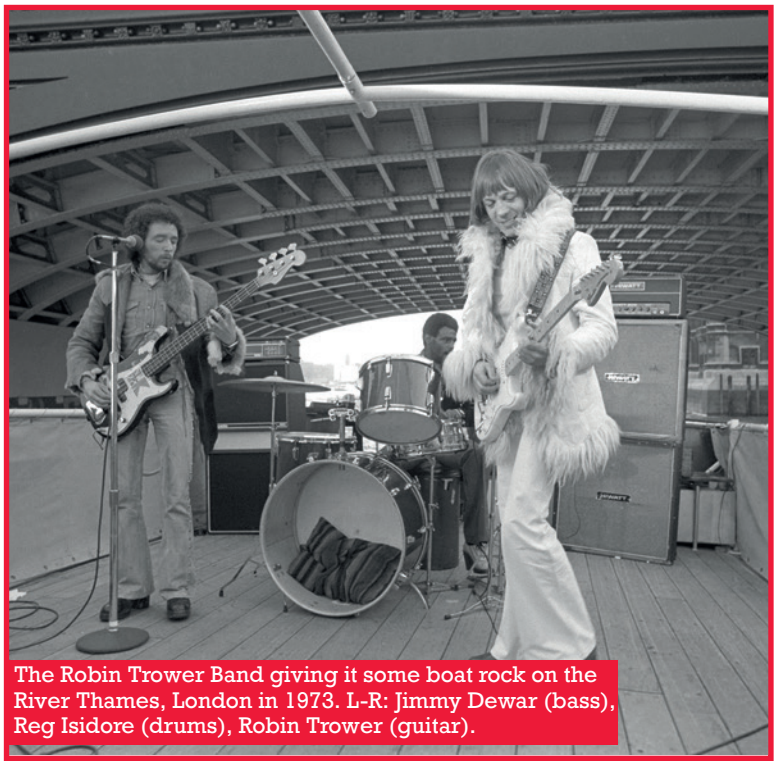
ROBIN TROWER

THE MUCH-REVERED GUITARIST ON HENDRIX, SUCCESS, AND HOW YOU SPELL OPETH...

INTERVIEW BY *HOWARD JOHNSON*

LEARNING TO PLAY

"I was only a kid, maybe 12 or 13, when I first heard [Elvis guitarist] Scotty Moore, but his playing really got inside my head and made me feel that I wanted to play guitar myself. It was a very exciting moment. My dad bought me a cheap guitar for Christmas and to be honest it came easily to me. I seemed to be able to play quite quickly, so there was obviously something there inside me. I didn't have any lessons, but I did have a book, *How To Make Chords*, and that was very helpful. With those few chords you could really get going, but even so I still didn't get in my first proper band, The Paramounts, for three or four years. By then I was obviously playing well enough to get away with it, and right from the start it felt very natural to be making music, although we were only doing covers in that band at the time. We were playing some wonderful music by people like Bobby Bland, James Brown, and Chuck Berry. That was a great learning process for me."



The Robin Trower Band giving it some boat rock on the River Thames, London in 1973. L-R: Jimmy Dewar (bass), Reg Isidore (drums), Robin Trower (guitar).

PROCOL HARUM

"I joined Procol Harum in 1967 just after 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale' had become a hit. That band was the best schooling I could have had. It was proper recording in proper studios, and proper touring too, especially in the US. Doing that really set me up wonderfully for my career. I was cocooned in that band until I grew in confidence enough to start writing material for a group of my own. I still appreciate the way that it all worked out for me. It made everything possible. Even though I didn't play on 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale' I didn't mind playing the song live at all, because it was a wonderful tune. But I thought we did a lot of good stuff in Procol Harum to be honest."

JIMI HENDRIX

"I don't think I cared that people compared me to Hendrix. I knew I was influenced by him, for sure, but I don't think it was fair on Jimi to compare me to him, because there was some real genius about what *he* did. Jimi was groovy. His playing on a track like 'Red House' somehow seemed to be more fluid than any guitarist who'd come before him. Everything he did was very soulful, and often technical players really aren't all that soulful. They tend to be more head than heart, but Jimi combined the two. I don't think I ever analysed his technique, though. Early in my career I didn't want to find out how other players did things. I was more interested in the feeling behind the notes. I had no interest in analysing people's music from a technical point of view, because I was already making my own music and didn't want to get sidetracked by learning other people's techniques."

"EARLY IN MY CAREER I HAD NO INTEREST IN ANALYSING PEOPLE'S MUSIC FROM A TECHNICAL POINT OF VIEW, BECAUSE I WAS ALREADY MAKING MY OWN MUSIC AND DIDN'T WANT TO GET SIDETRACKED BY LEARNING OTHER PEOPLE'S TECHNIQUES."

PLAYING WITH FRANKIE MILLER IN THE BAND JUDE

"I was very lucky to get together with Frankie for a while after I left Procol Harum. He's a wonderful singer and we wrote one or two good things together, but for some reason Jude didn't really work. I think the two of us had slightly different musical desires and Frankie eventually went off and did what was right for him, and I did the same. But it was through Frankie that I met [bassist] Jimmy Dewar, whom I ended up working with a lot. The experience with Jude showed me that I didn't really want to play in a four piece with an upfront singer. I just fancied having a three piece with the guitar as more of a focal point. I think that was because I had a lot of ideas at the time that made the songs more about the guitar – or at least *as much* about the guitar – as the vocals. I haven't seen Frankie in a long time, though. The last time I saw him was at Jimmy's funeral back in 2002."

THE ROBIN TROWER BAND

"I was coming up with some very strong musical ideas in 1973 and I just knew that a new band was what I had to do. I was very fortunate that it came together as easily as it did. I could have been casting around for years and years trying to find the right combination. But I'd already found Jimmy and I knew he was a great singer and a good bass player, so that was the key really. Having Jimmy helped us start the band [with drummer Reg Isidore] quickly. The name was my idea, because I always thought when someone left a group it was difficult to keep a name going. In situations like that it often didn't feel like the real band any more, and I didn't want to have to deal with that. I thought if I called the band by my own name then I wouldn't have to worry about that particular issue."

THE BREAKTHROUGH 'BRIDGE OF SIGHS' ALBUM

"I'm not sure you ever realise when you're on to something special. When you're working on any

Photos: Getty Images/Ebet Roberts/Redferns; Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns

RAPID FIRE RECALL

Robin, wearing a fancy hat, photographed with Procol Harum in March 1969

album you think it's good, of course, otherwise you wouldn't be doing it. But I don't think when I was putting 'Bridge Of Sighs' together in 1973 and 1974 that I had any idea it was going to be as successful as it was. I did know it was good, though. It had a bit of power and potency to it. I remember that we were on the road supporting Ten Years After when the record was in the Top 10. I remember thinking, 'Well the album's doing really well, but we're second on the bill, so we're not as big as Ten Years After.' I think that stopped me getting too carried away. Plus I was on such a low royalty for that record that it didn't have a particularly great effect financially. At the time I wasn't really interested in the money side of things. I just wanted to play guitar and make music and was very happy doing that. It was only some years later that I thought, 'Wait a minute.' But then, as always, it was too late."

OPETH'S COVER OF 'BRIDGE OF SIGHS'

"A Swedish metal band has done a cover of 'Bridge Of Sighs'? Really? How do you spell their name? O-P-E-T-H. Ah, OK. No, I've not heard about this. That's good news. I like that. I'll definitely go onto YouTube and have a listen to their version. Somebody actually sent me a YouTube clip of a 12-year-old boy playing 'Bridge Of Sighs' and he was absolutely fantastic, even at that age. It was ridiculous, really."

SUCCESS IN THE STATES

"I've always loved playing in America, going right back to the Procol Harum days. On the last US tour I did I played at the Fillmore in San Francisco, which is a special place, a fabulous live venue. That night I realised that the first time I'd played there was 50 years previously. And do you know what? I enjoyed it every bit as much. Playing live is just as much fun for me now as it was when I first started out. Of course back in the day I had no concept that I'd still be able to play in front of large audiences at the age of 74. When you're in your 20s you think, 'If I get 10 years out of this then that'll be great.'"

TEACHING GUITAR TO ROBERT FRIPP

"Robert likes to say that it happened, but it's not true. We were on tour together when he was in King Crimson and Bob and I got to be guitar-playing buddies. He said he was interested in how I did what I did, so one day we sat down with a couple of guitars and I simply showed him a few things. Maybe I gave Bob a foothold at the bottom of a particular hill, because what I was doing was completely different to what he does, but that's all. To be honest I wasn't really into King Crimson. I think Bob is a brilliant musician, but there's nothing in that music for me. I can't get a hold of it. I'm just a rock'n'roller really."

JACK BRUCE

"Jack was fabulous to work with and we did quite a few things together over many years. His bass playing and his singing were absolute dynamite. I think the best thing we did was the last album we did together called 'Seven Moons' [in 2007]. Both of us were proud of that album and we both thought it was better than anything we'd done together previously. We wrote the songs together on 'Seven Moons' and put it together *together*. There was a proper gelling on that one."

NIGHT OF THE GUITARS II

"That was a bunch of guitarists on a big tour together back in '91. To be honest I didn't really enjoy it very much, because I only had time to play a short set. It didn't really feel like making music the way I like to do it, so it was all a bit frustrating. All the guitarists got on well, though, and I particularly liked [Wishbone Ash guitarist] Laurie Wisefield. He's a lovely guy. Ronnie Montrose was on that tour as well. He was a good guy too."

BRYAN FERRY

"I worked on a couple of albums with Bryan in the '90s. He's a great artist, no doubt about it, and I'm not sure he gets the recognition he deserves with regard to how creative and influential he's been. He's always coming up with his own ideas, but he did let me help him put some

Photos: Getty Images/Jack Robinson/Hulton Archive; Getty Images/Richard McCaffrey/Michael Ochs Archive

Performing live at the Oakland Coliseum, California, 1975

stuff together. I think the last album I collaborated with him on [1994's 'Mamouna'] is a great album. We got on well because he had respect for me as a musician and I was an admirer of his all-round ability. He called me in for a session to play on a few things and I think he liked the cut of my jib and kind of asked me to stick around and help. From there we formed a good working relationship. I'm very proud of some of the things I did with him. We did a version of 'I Put A Spell On You' [on the 1993 album 'Taxi'] that I really like."

COLLAPSING AFTER A GIG IN 2018

"I remember that I picked up a virus, got very dehydrated onstage and started to pass out. I managed to get to the side of the stage and then blacked out. They took me to hospital and did all the tests and I was fine, but I really shouldn't have been doing that gig because I wasn't well. I was feeling rough and should have cancelled it, but I really hate cancelling shows."

THE MUSIC BUSINESS

"The music business isn't really much fun for me these days. Apart from the odd exception popular music has become very shallow – it's only about half an inch deep. I can see why the kids like it, but there's just nothing there for me. I suppose the secret of popular music is that it's easily graspable, but when you compare the pop music of today to, say, The Beatles... Even though I wasn't a great Beatles fan, when you listen to their records you can definitely hear that there's something happening there, that there's something going on. You just don't hear that today."

ARTISTIC FREEDOM

"As an artist all you want to do is do your stuff. When I was younger I do think I should have been more bumptious. I should have said what I really felt a lot more, but I wasn't confident enough to say to a producer or an engineer that what I was hearing wasn't what I wanted. I didn't speak up enough. Now I'm at the point in my career where I'm really doing it for my own enjoyment. I'm fortunate to be in a position where I can continue doing what I'm doing and not have some record company executive going, 'You've got to do something that's more *now*.' I don't have to bother about all that these days. Now I have complete freedom to do whatever I want, and that's a nice place to be. I'm still trying to do things that I judge to be really good, of course, and I'm in the fortunate position that enough people like it, which means that I can keep going."

"I DO THINK I SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE BUMPTIOUS. I SHOULD HAVE SAID WHAT I REALLY FELT A LOT MORE, BUT I WASN'T CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO SAY TO A PRODUCER OR AN ENGINEER THAT WHAT I WAS HEARING WASN'T WHAT I WANTED. I DIDN'T SPEAK UP ENOUGH."

THE JOY OF PLAYING

"I just love to play the guitar, so if I pick a guitar up at home quite often I'll come up with a song idea. One of the greatest joys of this job is creating new songs, new tracks, new music – and that all stems from the love of playing guitar. I love it. Making music is everything to me. I'm very, very fortunate that I still get to do it, and I'm never going to stop."

UNCOVERED

THEY SAID IT WOULD NEVER HAPPEN!!

THEY SAID IT WOULD NEVER HAPPEN
GUNS N' ROSES
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...and some people ended up wishing it hadn't! When the two biggest rock bands in the world, **Guns N' Roses** and **Metallica**, joined up to tour North America in 1992 it looked like the greatest live package ever put together. But as *Dave Ling* recounts, things soon turned mighty sour...

METALLICA AND GUNS N' ROSES were the oil and water of the early-'90s rock scene. The former had emerged blinking out of the San Francisco thrash metal underworld, all acne and attitude and with an avowed aversion to all of that LA music industry bullsh*t. The latter had made it out of the Sunset Strip glam rock world, embracing cocaine and heroin, and enthusiastically endorsing casual sex with any number of plastically enhanced women. Metallica were known to be a well-oiled machine, playing endless dates on endless tours and always being on point. Guns was a band permanently on the edge of a nervous breakdown. On the surface the two bands had nothing in common. Apart, that is, from the fact that they were both ridiculously popular, and they both liked to rock. Come to think about it, though, there was a certain mindset both groups shared. They could both do whatever the f*ck they wanted. And the idea that nobody thought they could pull off a tour together was the very thing that drew two very different, equally cantankerous acts into each other's orbit back in 1992.

THE IDEA THAT NOBODY THOUGHT GUNS AND METALLICA COULD PULL OFF A TOUR TOGETHER WAS THE VERY THING THAT DREW TWO VERY DIFFERENT, EQUALLY CANTANKEROUS ACTS INTO EACH OTHER'S ORBIT BACK IN 1992.

You might want to take five minutes here to remember just how big these two acts were at the time. In those pre-streaming days fans were absolutely ravenous for CD product, and both Metallica and Guns had released mind-blowingly successful albums in 1991. Metallica were first out of the blocks with 'Metallica', known to all and sundry as 'The Black Album'. Released on 12 August 1991, it would go on to sell 16 million copies in the US alone. The Guns double whammy of 'Use Your Illusion I' and 'Use Your Illusion II' arrived on 17 September that same year. They would go on to sell seven million copies each in the US. 'Big' is a word that barely covers the success both bands were enjoying at that same moment in time.

It didn't take a genius to work out that a tour featuring both acts together could mark a milestone in rock history. Nor did you have to be a particularly savvy businessman to realise that such a tour would be a monumental moneymaker. So from both the creative and the commercial side Metallica/Guns dates made perfect sense. And when you hit that particular sweet spot, then people invariably get their heads together and talk.

THERE WAS, nevertheless, some jeopardy involved. It was at that point unproven whether there were

Photos: Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns; Getty Images/Tim Mosenfelder/ImageDirect

enough fans of both bands who'd be willing to fork out what would inevitably be a very high ticket price. And even if they did, could peace be guaranteed to reign in the stadia if there were two bloody-minded fan factions in close proximity to each other? And then there was the W. Axl Rose factor to contend with. The Guns frontman was a notoriously loose cannon with short-fuse behaviour and extremely poor onstage time-keeping. If he couldn't be relied on to just turn up and do his gig, then the whole project would quickly end up dying in a ditch.

At the end of the day, though, and to no one's great surprise, money talked and bullsh*t walked. The two bands' respective management teams called a pow-wow to discuss the prospect at trendy Sunset Strip restaurant Le Dome and a deal was thrashed out. And an interesting deal it was too. Although the contract for the tour would guarantee both acts equal stage time of two hours and 15 minutes per night, it was also agreed that G N' R would close the show *every single night*. Gate receipts would be split in half. The anticipated gross would be between $1 and $1.8 million per night, with a total predicted attendance over the course of 24 dates set at a whopping 800,000. Another 1991 breakout rock act, Nirvana, whose seminal 'Nevermind' album was released on 24 September that year, were originally sounded out to open the show.

"One day we're walking through an airport and Kurt says, 'F*ck. Axl Rose won't stop calling me,'" Nirvana drummer Dave Grohl explained to *Esquire* magazine years later. "I think [to Kurt] it represented something bigger. Nirvana didn't want to turn into Guns N' Roses. So Kurt started talking sh*t in interviews and then Axl started talking back. It went back and forth like tenth-grade bullsh*t."

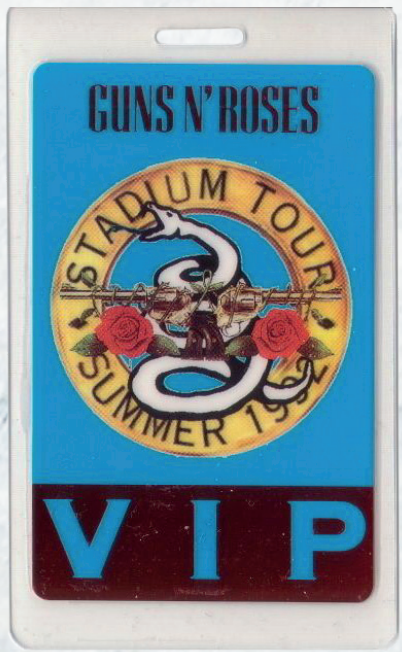
With that particular avenue quickly closed down the slightly less negative attitude of Faith No More was considered more of a goer, and the San Francisco group quickly accepted the offer to open the show.

ON 12 May 1992 Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich and Guns lead guitarist Slash held a press conference at the Gaslight club in Los Angeles to announce that the seemingly endless rumours were indeed true. Metallica and Guns N' Roses were finally going to combine forces for a summertime North American stadium tour.

"I've always wanted to play with these guys ever since we met them in 1987," Ulrich told the gathered media. "I'm the one who had all the late night conversations with the various members of Guns. Back in '87 we were the bigger band, and then *they* became the biggest band in the universe. Now in the hard rock scene of 1992 we're the *two* biggest bands. After many years of drunken babbling about doing gigs together the day has finally arrived when the verbal diarrhoea becomes reality."

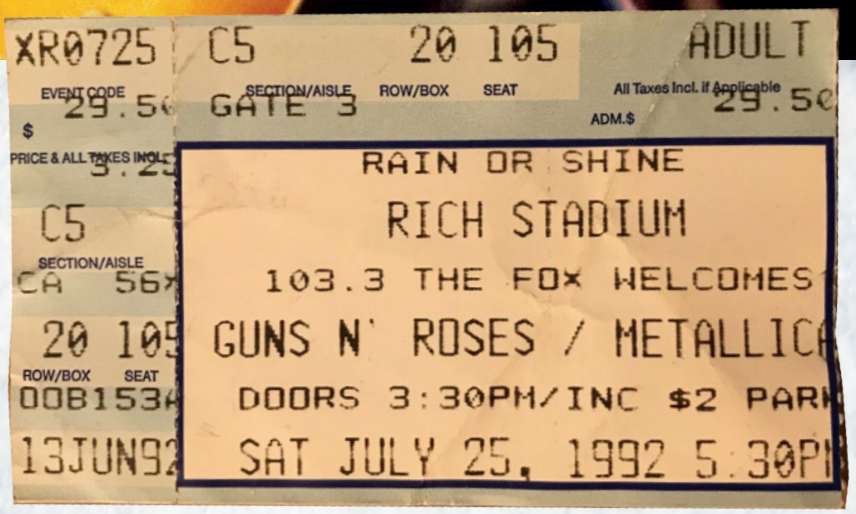
"We wanted to put together a heavy duty rock show from beginning to end," Slash elaborated. "There haven't been two bands of this size joining up since the 1970s."

> "WE WANTED TO JUST GO OUT AND F*CKING PLAY, BUT THEY WANTED THIS CARNIVAL-STYLE, ALMOST LOLLAPALOOZA THING. THEY WANTED TO MAKE KIDS AWARE OF CERTAIN [POLITICAL AND ACTIVIST] GROUPS THROUGH BOOTHS OUT FRONT AND PERSONALLY I WASN'T INTO THAT AT ALL."
> **JAMES HETFIELD**



A mock-up of the posters for the tour that would run through July, August and September declared: 'They Said It Would Never Happen'. Oh how droll. The trouble was, by its conclusion many of the participants probably wished that it hadn't...

EVEN BEFORE the first show had taken place at the 47,498 capacity RFK Stadium in Washington D.C. on 17 July things had started to look shaky when it was announced that Rose would have to face trial in St Louis once the tour was over. On 12 July New York cops had arrested the singer at JFK Airport as he returned to the States following gigs in Europe. Rose had an arrest warrant hanging over him after supposedly inciting a riot at the St Louis Riverport Amphitheatre a year previously. The



singer had quit the stage early that night following a dispute with an audience member whom Axl claimed had photographed him without his permission. When Guns N' Roses failed to complete the concert fans took their fury out both on the hall and on one another. Sixty people were injured and around $100,000 of damage was caused. On his return to the States in July the NYPD held Rose in the cells overnight, before releasing him on $100,000 bail and ordering him to surrender to St Louis officials within the week. Rose finally appeared in the city on 14 July, where he pleaded not guilty to the charges. He was again bailed for $100,000 and was ordered to stand trial on 15 October. A judge would eventually rule that Rose had *not* directly incited the riot.

Rose – and by definition the tour – had escaped disaster by the skin of his teeth, and the first show was able to go ahead as planned in front of a sold-out crowd. Metallica performed their opening set without any issues. Newspaper reviewer J. Doug Gill from *The Baltimore Sun* was impressed enough by what he saw to suggest that "Metallica has reached a level of instrumental maturity unequalled in rock's Panzer division... this four-piece band is a hard act to follow, and that's just the position Guns N' Roses found themselves in."

Guns' ability to match up to their rivals' firepower wasn't helped by the fact that a whopping two hours would tick by between the last chords of Metallica's set closer 'One' and the start of their own performance with 'It's So Easy'. Some fans had already had to leave to catch the last train home, and many who stayed found that the energy levels in the arena were depleted. Guns had filled out their line-up to include three backing vocalists and three horn players, swelling the ranks on stage to a hefty 13 people. The second half of the band's show featured a number of solo spots as Axl pleaded with the audience to "wake the f*ck up." If Guns N' Roses didn't watch their step there was every chance that things would go horribly wrong for them all tour long.

Writing about the opening night in *Kerrang!* Chris Smith shared this fear: "Guns N' Roses have turned into a love/hate affair of late. I pretty much love them, but you still can't look too closely at the parts. Individually, all of the band has moments when they look a bit too comfortable on a stadium stage, the rot having begun to set in. However, if you focus on the songs damn near everything seems to be gold."

***KERRANG!* WRITER** Steffan Chirazi caught up with Metallica after three shows.

"[Away from the stage] I haven't even seen those [Guns N' Roses] guys yet," guitarist and vocalist James Hetfield laughed, though he suspected that the same wasn't true of Lars Ulrich. "Lars likes this rock'n'roll thing; he likes to hang out and drink all f*ckin' night, and I'd rather get up and go out fishing."

Photo: Getty Images/Kevin Mazur/WireImage

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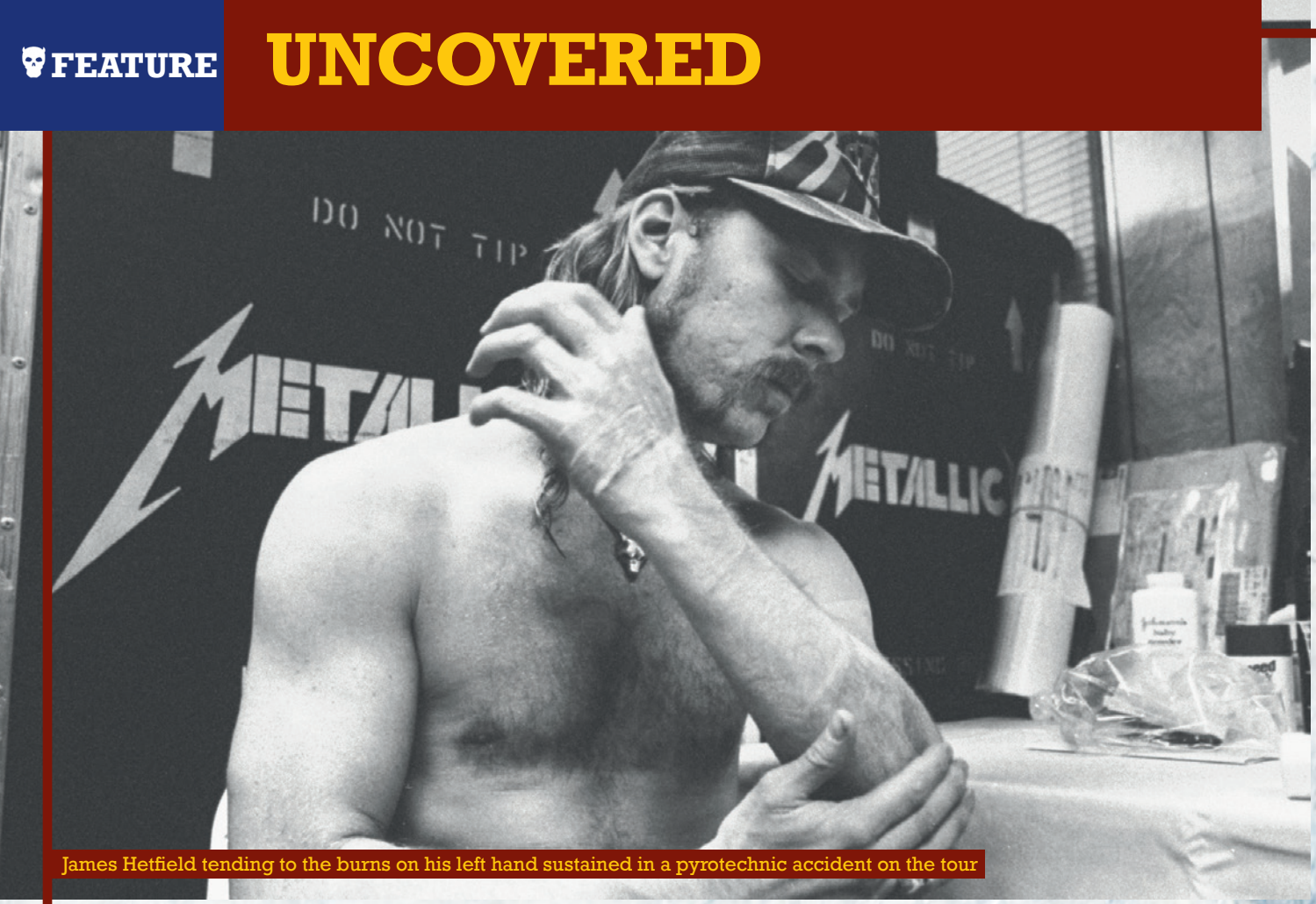


James Hetfield tending to the burns on his left hand sustained in a pyrotechnic accident on the tour

James admitted that he had to "keep an eye" on Lars "or else he'd run away with" a drum solo of his own every night. Hetfield also told Chirazi about the many problems that had been overcome during the tour's planning.

"It was pretty difficult, getting the 50/50 thing together, agreeing on a stage and times, where we're playing. It reminded me of buying a car; you're sitting there and bartering. Axl wants a ramp that goes way out into the crowd, while I'd rather hang with the boys, not being a frontman as such."

To circumnavigate such stalemates the band members took matters out of the hands of their management teams.

"Me and Lars went out with Slash and Axl, had a little dinner and talked," Hetfield confided. "We had two different ideas, it turned out. We wanted to just go out and f*cking play, but they wanted this carnival-style, almost Lollapalooza thing. They wanted to make kids aware of certain [political and activist] groups through booths out front and personally I wasn't into that at all," Hetfield continued. "There are some booths out there now which I don't agree with at all. But that's part of the compromise sh*t you work out."

The chasm between the attitudes of the two bands was patently obvious, but nobody could call Metallica naïve. They knew perfectly well that their no-bullsh*t approach would give them a serious chance of winning this particular battle of the bands.

"We're out there grabbing some of their fans by the throat and going, 'Wake up, you mother*ckers. This ain't no fantasy sh*t, no rock'n'roll f*ckin' dream'," Hetfield observed. "That's why we're here, to grab new fans."

The following day, 22 July, Chirazi spoke to Lars Ulrich after a show at the 46,000-capacity Hoosier Dome in Indianapolis.

"Taking the two biggest bands from one genre of music and putting them together is unprecedented," the drummer claimed. When the writer pointed out that *Spinal Tap*-style arguments were taking place about the positions of band names on T-shirts the drummer cut right to the chase.

"Look," he roared, sounding exasperated. "The four of us [Metallica] are incredibly egotistical – end of story. Guns N' Roses are incredibly set in their ways too, and that's just the way it is. I don't think any of us realised, when we sat down and talked about doing this tour together, how tough it would be [to make it happen]. And it's down to the band members, because had it been left to the managers, agents, and accountants this would never have got off the ground."

IT SOON became apparent, however, that an excess of ego in the two camps wasn't going to be the only

Photos: Getty Images/John Storey/The LIFE Images Collection; Getty Images/Gie Knaeps

problem that would have to be overcome. During a second Giants Stadium, New Jersey show on 29 July – the first bizarrely having been 11 days earlier on 18 July – Rose began to experience severe throat pain. Nevertheless the singer persevered until he was hit by a projectile thrown from the audience, thought to be a cigarette lighter. Rose left the stage, leaving bassist Duff McKagan to take the mic for the remainder of the show. The following day doctors told Rose that he'd severely damaged his vocal chords and prescribed a week of rest. Three gigs had to be rescheduled.

The show got back on the road with a concert at the Olympic Stadium in Montreal, Canada on 8 August. But if everyone was keeping fingers crossed that the gig would pass off without incident they were going to be sorely disappointed. 54,666 fans watched in disbelief as James Hetfield was injured onstage by a pyrotechnic blast that ignited at the wrong time. As Hetfield was starting the introduction to 'Fade To Black' he suffered second and third degree burns to the left hand side of his body. Hetfield was rushed to hospital as the band apologised for being unable to finish their set. Although doctors predicted a full recovery, Hetfield was told not to play guitar for a period of between two and four weeks. James later explained: "There was extra pyro in addition to the original pyro, and I got too close to the original pyro. I'm burnt," he said in a state of shock. "All of my arm, my hand completely, down to the bone. The side of my face. Hair's gone. Part of my back... I watched the skin just rising, all these things going wrong."

To make matters worse, as medics swarmed around him a security guard happened to brush against the guitarist's charred arm. "I screamed and punched him right in the nuts," James recalled. "This is pain I've never felt in my whole life and it won't go away. I'm freaking at this point."

> "LET ME TELL YOU A COUPLE OF THINGS ABOUT METALLICA. FIRST OFF, THEY DO A LOT OF BITCHING FOR A BAND WHO GOT PAID 20-30 PER CENT MORE THAN THEY DESERVED, BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T BRING MUCH."
> **AXL ROSE**

AT THE time of the accident Guns N' Roses hadn't even arrived at the Montreal Stadium, so another marathon wait between bands didn't exactly thrill the Canadian audience, though they remained well behaved during the break. Then – and much to the chagrin of Axl Rose – G N' R's set that night was plagued by onstage sound problems, meaning the band had trouble hearing themselves through the onstage monitors. It was all too much for Rose, who threw his mic down and stomped off after a mere 15 minutes, telling the crowd that they could get their 40 bucks ticket money refunded. The rest of the band tried to carry on playing, but it soon became obvious that the show was over no matter who would have preferred it to continue. By way of explanation Rose reminded an MTV interviewer that a batch of previous shows had already been postponed.

"We'd just stopped the tour because I had throat problems," he said. "I realised: 'I'm gonna hurt myself [unless I stop]'. I told Slash: 'Two more songs and if we can't get it fixed I gotta go.' We did more than two more songs, then I looked over and [Guns guitarist] Gilby [Clarke] was like: 'Dude, I can't hear.' And Duff was like: 'I can't hear either.' We had a little huddle and we said: 'We're outta here.'"

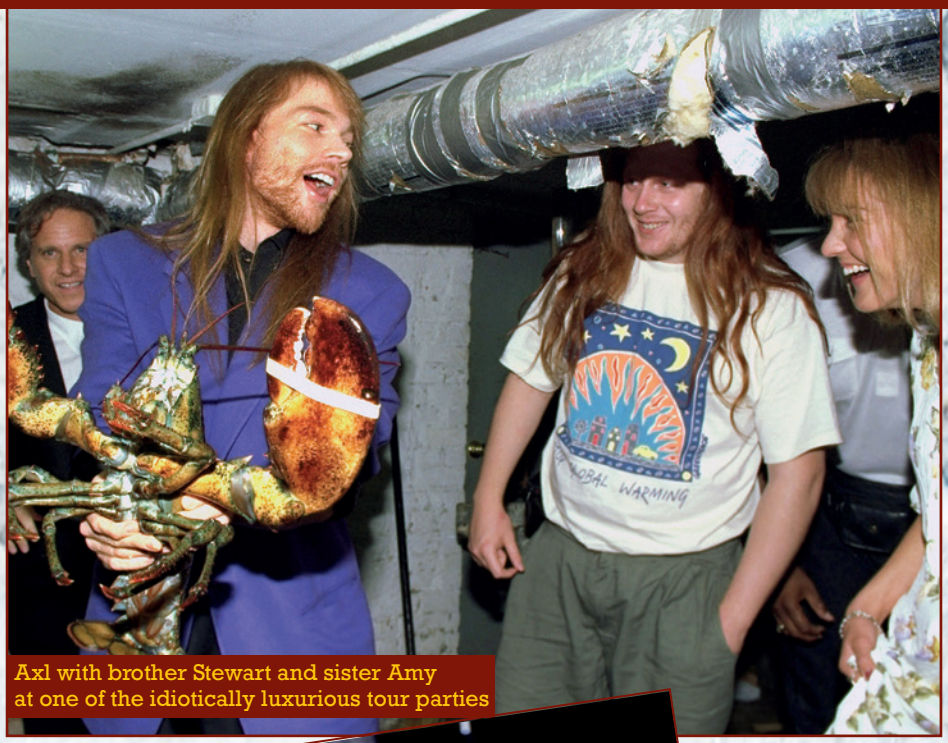
"The PA fed back the entire time, as did the monitors, and the crowd was like non-existent," Slash later told MTV. "Montreal was just really creepy. Nothing against the people of Montreal. We had a great time hanging out there. I think it was the building itself."

During the same MTV special feature on the tour Rose admitted to having a regular, intense course of psychotherapy. "I'd come offstage and do a session on the phone or have a person fly out and do four of five hours", the singer volunteered to presenter Tabitha Soren.

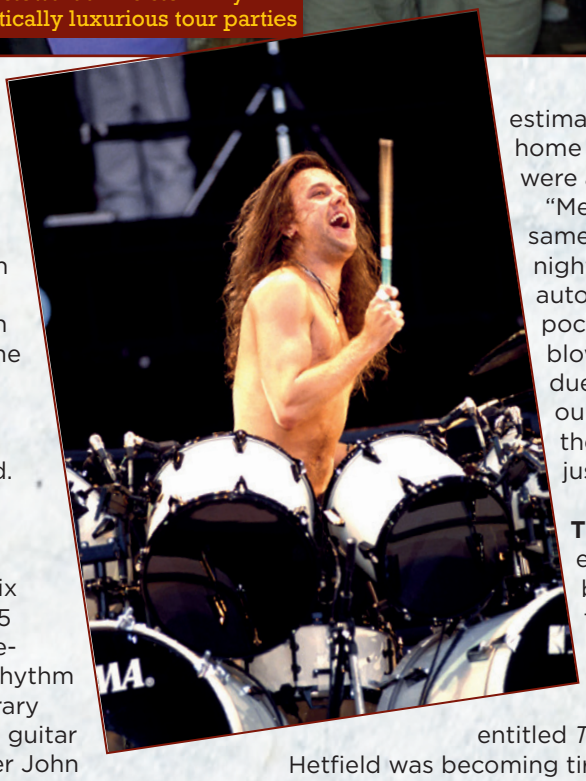
Regardless of Axl's psychiatric needs the Montreal crowd had paid big money only to witness a pair of

truncated sets during one single evening. Over the next two hours some fans went on the rampage, both inside the venue and on the streets outside, smashing shop windows and looting, flipping over cars and setting things on fire. With around half a million dollars in damages inflicted, riot gear-clad cops were deployed to arrest rowdy fans.

A second Canadian concert in Toronto that was scheduled for the following day was postponed until 13 September, while a third Canadian appearance in Vancouver had to be cancelled altogether. In total six of the tour's gigs were rescheduled as the Montreal incident cast a further stain upon Guns N' Roses's reputation, reducing them to a laughing stock in the eyes of some of their peers. Some weeks later U2 played in Montreal. After a few minutes singer Bono deliberately brought their show to a standstill. "What time is it?" he joked. "We gotta go."



Axl with brother Stewart and sister Amy at one of the idiotically luxurious tour parties



WHEN THE Metallica/Guns tour finally picked up again at the Phoenix International Raceway, Arizona on 25 August Metallica performed as a five-piece. With Hetfield unable to play rhythm guitar the band brought in a temporary additional member, former Metallica guitar tech and Metal Church band member John Marshall. Without his guitar to take refuge behind, and feeling uncomfortable as just a vocalist, Hetfield found the tour's remaining shows awkward.

"It sucks," he told the *Columbus Dispatch* newspaper. "A lot of our songs have some pretty long instrumental bits. It's like, 'What the hell am I going to do here? Head backstage, do some laundry?' You can only be a cheerleader for so much, and it looks kind of silly."

Amazingly the tour managed to reach its conclusion 17 shows later without any more major incidents – at least if you didn't count Axl's inevitable tardiness to the stage and a willingness to leave it early and without warning. The singer's onstage behaviour was beginning to jar more and more with his bandmates – and that was before the astronomical amounts of the band's money Rose was lavishing on after-show parties that went by such names as Casino Night, The Roman Bath Party, and Axl's Mexican Fiesta were taken into account. What's more, unions working the shows demanded massive payments for every minute of overtime that Rose made everyone work by being late. The singer's response? "When the time is right, the stage will ignite." The rest of Guns N' Roses didn't see things that way and it's since been estimated that Guns eventually took home just 20 per cent of what they were actually paid for performing.

"Metallica was earning the exact same paycheck as we were every night," wrote Slash in his eponymous autobiography. "But while they pocketed the whole thing we were blowing 80 per cent, both on union dues for all the overtime we cost ourselves going on late and on these stupid theme parties. It was just bad."

THREE DATES away from the end of the tour, which would be in front of 37,226 fans at the Kingdome in Seattle on 6 October, *Kerrang!* dispatched writer Mörat to San Diego for a cover interview with Metallica entitled *Two Sides To Every Story*. By now Hetfield was becoming tired of the whole pantomime.

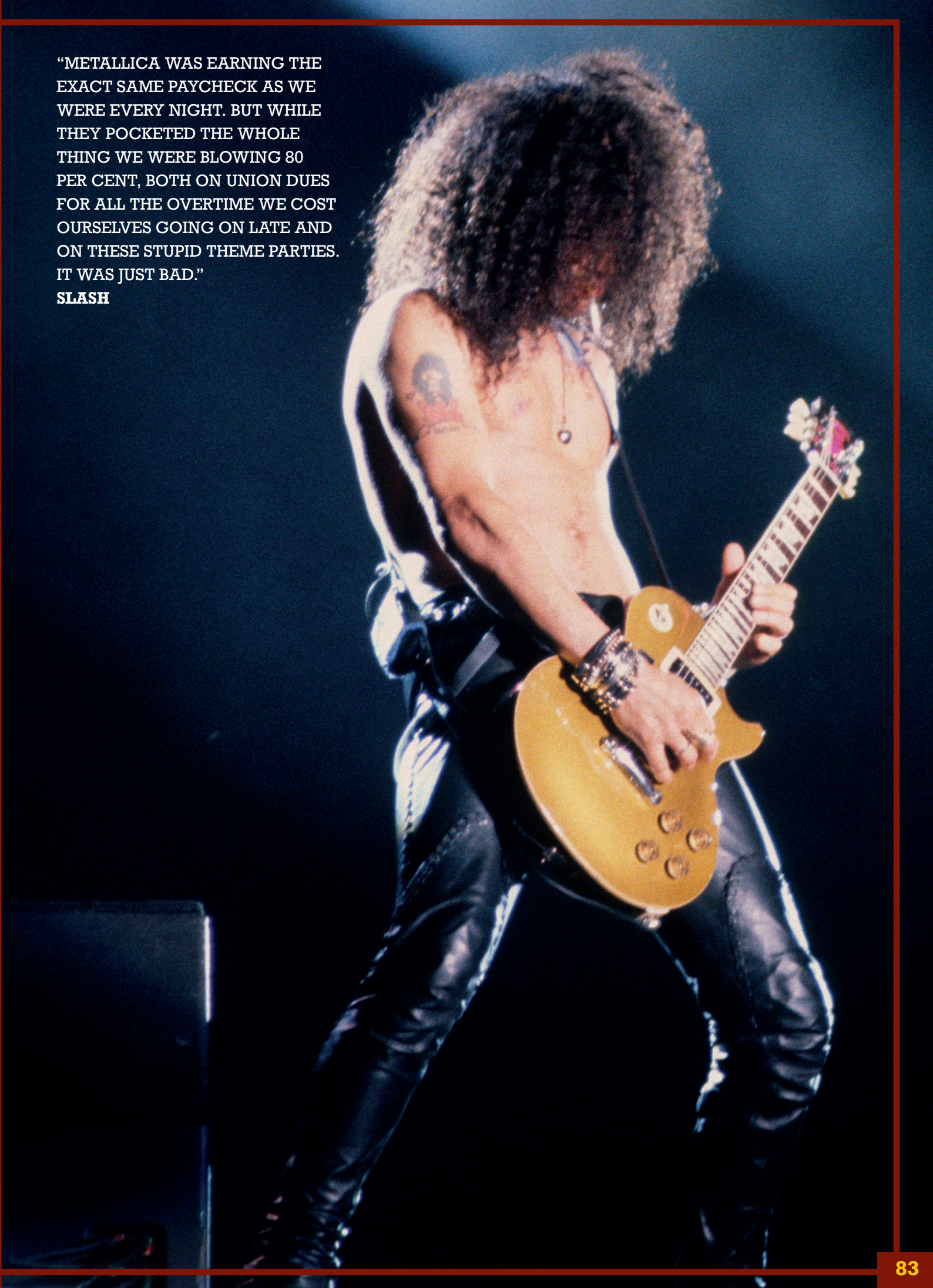
"As far as hanging out goes, we're not the best of buds [with Guns N' Roses]," he admitted. "Lars loves that sh*t. He loves to do that stuff and that's fine. He's kinda like the drunk PR guy sometimes. He likes to hang out with a bunch of drunk rockers."

James was definitely no fan of Axl Rose. "The rioting, that's part of their show, I guess," he said witheringly. "That's how they get attention, man. Their set is kinda boring, so they have to do something like that. [In Montreal] he had to top what I did [to my arm]. 'I know, I'll start a riot and steal the press away.'"

Hetfield also revealed that Rose had thrown a tantrum in Denver a few days before the interview.

"I was having dinner [after our performance] and our road manager says: 'Don't go anywhere. Axl's left the building.' Like I was gonna run somewhere. I guess they finally coaxed him back. The police locked all

Photos: Getty Images/Richard Corkery/NY Daily News Archive; Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns; Getty Images/Gie Knaeps



"METALLICA WAS EARNING THE EXACT SAME PAYCHECK AS WE WERE EVERY NIGHT. BUT WHILE THEY POCKETED THE WHOLE THING WE WERE BLOWING 80 PER CENT, BOTH ON UNION DUES FOR ALL THE OVERTIME WE COST OURSELVES GOING ON LATE AND ON THESE STUPID THEME PARTIES. IT WAS JUST BAD."
SLASH

the gates so he couldn't leave again. That's when it turns into a joke."

Despite his more party hardy attitude the events of the tour had forced even Ulrich to take a look at himself and those he chose to work with.

"I'm the one that's probably having the most fun doing this, and the other three guys kinda run away from it," the drummer admitted, before adding a significant observation: "The other three are the ones who've changed the most because we *all* used to be into it."

Talking years later, Metallica's bassist on the tour, Jason Newsted, didn't mince his words when discussing what had happened.

"They [Guns] played after us, whenever they decided to come on stage – 30 minutes late, an hour late, two hours late, whatever the time homeboy decided to come on. They showed me what I don't ever want to become. Antics, p*ssing away of money, disrespecting people that work for you, looking down on people who look up to you. That's the worst thing you can do, especially in this business. I saw them do that a lot, and I didn't like it."

The tour also left scars on Slash, who referred to the Montreal riot in his book: "It was actually a huge issue for me, because I'd lost face with everyone in Metallica."

"THEY SHOWED ME WHAT I DON'T EVER WANT TO BECOME. ANTICS, P*SSING AWAY OF MONEY, DISRESPECTING PEOPLE THAT WORK FOR YOU, LOOKING DOWN ON PEOPLE WHO LOOK UP TO YOU. THAT'S THE WORST THING YOU CAN DO, ESPECIALLY IN THIS BUSINESS. I SAW THEM DO THAT A LOT, AND I DIDN'T LIKE IT."
JASON NEWSTED

TIME MOVED on, of course, but Axl Rose just wouldn't let it go. Almost a year later when Guns N'Roses played at the Arco Arena in Sacramento, which was pretty much Metallica's home turf, Rose unleashed an astonishing attack on Metallica's contribution to the joint tour direct from the stage.

"Let me tell you a couple of things about Metallica", he told the crowd. "First off, they do a lot of bitching for a band who got paid 20-30 per cent more than they deserved, because they didn't bring much. I was friends with these people."

Rose then claimed that Metallica treated their road crew badly and even stole an idea for a video from GN'R.

"Lars don't give a sh*t," he continued. "The motherf*cker calls me at 4am trying to kiss my ass. We talked about [a video being shot underwater] and then Lars runs home and writes a video. And he copped to it: 'Yeah, I was ripping you guys off.'

"I'm gonna dedicate this song to those people who like to ruin videos with people saying: 'F*ck you, this isn't the Guns N' Roses tour, this is Metallica.' You're no friends of mine, you stupid little c*cksuckers. This is for you, Lars, and you, James – this is called 'Double Talkin' Jive Motherf*cker'."

In the face of such provocation, Ulrich and Hetfield were serene.

"He has a lot of room to talk, doesn't he?" Lars chuckled when confronted by the accusations in *Kerrang!* "We treat our crew with disrespect? This comes from the man who, on countless nights of the tour, keeps the crew and the rest of the band waiting for two, three hours. The main problem is that Axl has a lot of people around him that protect him from what's going on, and by the time a lot of info gets to him the truth has been so distorted that he reacts only to what he hears."

"Who knows what he's on about?" mused James. "*He* doesn't know."

"[Since the tour] Guns N' Roses bashing has been pretty much the most popular thing in the music biz, and I've spent so much time arguing with people who slagged them," sighed Lars. "Because I *do* like them. I quite like the guy."

TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS after they said it would never happen we can only assume that some of the animosity that lingered after the joint tour has subsided, and that the main protagonists have grown up and got some perspective on their behaviour at the time. What is perhaps most incredible is that to this day both bands remain massive draws in their own right. And one thing is certain. If ever the appetite were there for another co-headlining venture it would be every bit as big as the 1992 trek. Who knows how everyone would behave? But when you're talking about staying power, Guns N' Roses and Metallica are *still* in a class of their own.

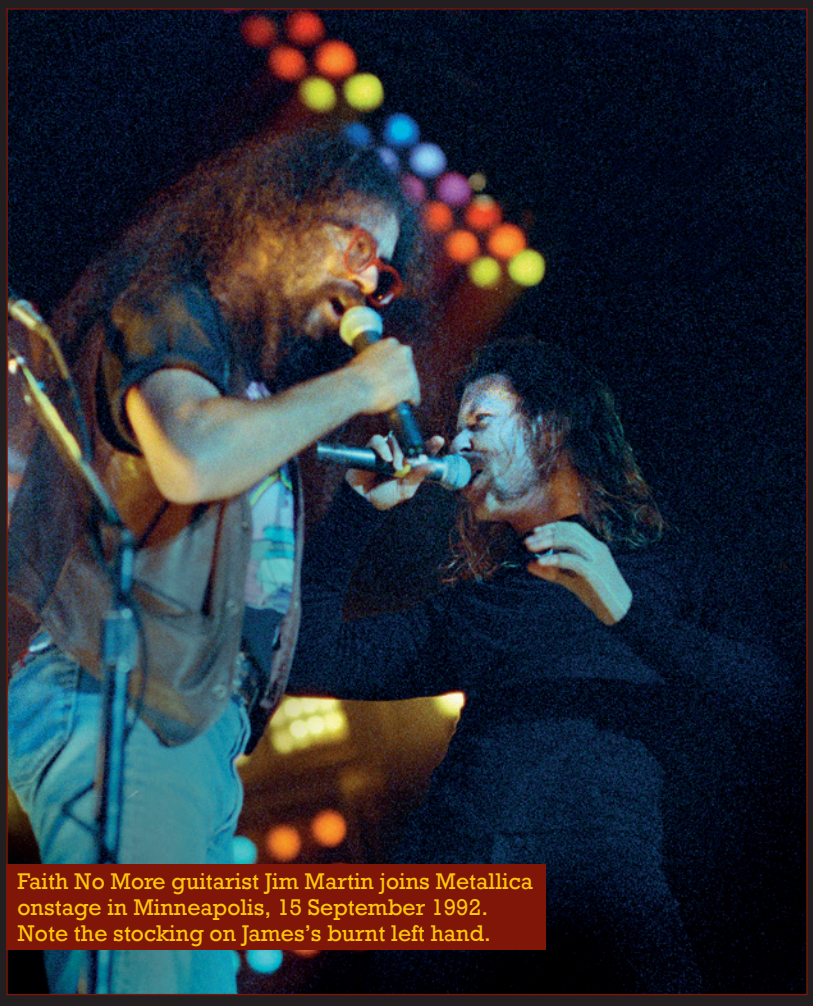
Photos: Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns; Getty Images/David Brewster/Star Tribune

"That is anti what we're all about"

In the midst of the maelstrom with **Faith No More**

FAITH NO MORE'S POSITION as opening act gave them a unique opportunity to witness the madness of the 'They Said It Wouldn't Happen Tour' at close range. The band was contracted to go onstage for 45 minutes at 4pm, a time when the venues were often still filling up with audiences that were so fixated on the two main acts that they generally treated FNM as nothing more than an annoyance. All they seemed to recognise was one solitary song, the MTV-approved 'Epic'.

Behind the scenes Faith No More found the tour's excesses both amusing and nauseating, probably in equal measure. While the headliners flew between shows in privately chartered planes (Metallica favouring a 747, GN'R a DC10), the opening act travelled thousands of miles a day by bus. By the time the tour was 12 days old Faith No More had been in contact with W Axl Rose just once – and that was via a tour manager who relayed a message that should the band's frontman Mike Patton ever encourage the crowd to throw beer at his own guitarist Jim Martin again, then Faith No More would be heading home early.



Faith No More guitarist Jim Martin joins Metallica onstage in Minneapolis, 15 September 1992. Note the stocking on James's burnt left hand.

WHEN *KERRANG!* writer Chris Watts spent some time with FNM at a gig at the Texas Stadium in Irving on 5 September he found a band that was unsure whether to laugh or cry. "This isn't really a rock'n'roll tour," half-joked bassist Billy Gould. "It's a mini-empire."

"Our job is just to be ourselves and not to suck corporate d*ck," observed Patton with a chuckle. "I'm looking forward to playing the smaller venues on our own tour after this. I just can't imagine our band becoming as big as Metallica. I don't think I'd enjoy it."

That's not to say FNM didn't understand the trek's appeal. They just considered its ostentatious nature rather pointless.

"This tour is like a crowning glory for both headline bands," observed drummer Mike Bordin. "There hasn't been a tour like this for years. We're not used to the atmosphere, it's not really conducive to our band playing well. It's like the Village People syndrome. Show business. Mass entertainment."

"It's difficult playing every night to people who aren't interested in us," agreed Gould. "Maybe some of them do hate us, but that's cool. If they didn't we'd feel like we were kissing ass."

"I feel like a zoo animal up there," Patton commented. "It's like when you fart in the presence of someone you shouldn't. You laugh; it's like a nervous reaction to the whole scale of things out there. It's embarrassing."

INTER-BAND relations with Jim Martin, who was on his last legs as a member of FNM, only ramped up the feelings of awkwardness. The ever-inebriated guitarist was in his element amid the trek's overall vibe of extreme hedonism. Martin's bandmates abhorred his lewd behaviour. Backstage, when Patton spotted the guitarist standing on a table trying to persuade a cute blonde to remove her bikini top he erupted: "That's f*cking vile! F*ck that! God, what an asshole. I don't want anything to do with that, goddamn it. That's bullsh*t."

"That is anti what we're all about," echoed keyboardist Roddy Bottum. "All the bad things about this tour are outside the window now. It's disgusting. It's ridiculous."

"There's four of them against the one of me," a downhearted Martin complained. "Sometimes I hate those f*ckers."

Faith No More left the tour on 21 September after they completed the dates as they were originally scheduled. It was either Body Count or Motörhead who performed at the rearranged shows. Within a year FNM had replaced Martin with Trey Spruance. At least Big Jim couldn't say he wasn't warned!

BLACK SABBATH

'HEAVEN AND HELL'

DATELINE: APRIL 1980

HAS THE FIRST SABS ALBUM WITH DIO STILL GOT THE MAGIC?

BLACK SABBATH
'Heaven And Hell'
(Vertigo)
Released: 25 April 1980

LINE UP
TONY IOMMI – guitar
GEEZER BUTLER – bass guitar
BILL WARD – drums, percussion
RONNIE JAMES DIO – lead vocals

PRODUCED BY
Martin Birch

RECORDED AT
Criteria Recording Studios, Miami, Florida; Studio Ferber, Paris, France

TRACK LISTING
Neon Knights
Children Of The Sea
Lady Evil
Heaven And Hell
Wishing Well
Die Young
Walk Away
Lonely Is The Word

All music written and arranged by Butler, Dio, Iommi, and Ward. Lyrics by Dio.

TONY IOMMI ON 'HEAVEN AND HELL': "We went in a very different direction with 'Heaven And Hell'. With a different type of voice you can create in a different way. When Ozzy was in the band I'd play a riff and he'd generally sing *with* the riff. Ronnie sang across the riff, and that made it different to what had gone before. It kind of worked."

IT WAS NINE YEARS after the release of the first Black Sabbath album from 1970, and the band that had enjoyed enormous success, single-handedly changing the sound of rock along the way, was in a real state. According to guitarist Tony Iommi, "Ozzy [Osbourne] just wasn't into it any more and things were getting really stale." Iommi was even toying with the idea of quitting Sabbath altogether and starting something new with Ronnie Dio, having been introduced to the singer at a party in Los Angeles, the city where Sabbath were trying – and failing – to get some new material together.

Ronnie came over to where Iommi, bassist Geezer Butler, and drummer Bill Ward were holed up to have a bash. As soon as he opened his mouth to sing on 'Children Of The Sea', a number Sabbath had been unable to finish with Ozzy, Iommi knew that Ronnie was "the guy".

But even then it wasn't all plain sailing. Geezer quickly dropped out to deal with a messy divorce and demos were recorded without him. By the time he came back Sabbath were already ensconced in Criteria Studios in Miami working on a new album. Legendary producer Martin Birch, who'd recorded Deep Purple, and then Ronnie in Rainbow, was already on board and two songs, 'Heaven And Hell' and 'Die Young', were well underway.

Super impressed by what he heard, Butler was fired up again and Sabbath set about creating a completely new sound. Osbourne's distinctive wail had undoubtedly given them a unique feel, but nobody could deny that Dio was a far superior singer from a technical point of view.

L-R: Geezer Butler, Bill Ward, and Ronnie Dio bringing 'Heaven And Hell' to the masses in 1980

PEOPLE HAD CRITICISED SABBATH FOR BEING BLOATED AND JADED AS THE '70S DREW TO A CLOSE. SUDDENLY HERE THEY WERE SOUNDING FRESH, VITAL AND RELEVANT ONCE MORE.

ENERGISED BY a vocalist who had a greater understanding of musicality, Iommi was keen to update Sabbath's sludgy sound while still retaining the group's essential dynamics. Having Birch on board after not using an outside producer "in years" gave Sabbath a better chance of reinventing themselves sonically. Birch even wanted to clean up Butler's signature bass sound, but that was a step too far for Iommi, who put his foot down on that one. Apart from that one red line, though, the guitarist was happy to give Birch free rein.

Recording took place at Criteria in Miami and Studio Ferber in Paris between October of 1979 and January of 1980. And when 'Heaven And Hell' was released in April fans finally got to hear what the new Sabbath sounded like. The reception to the album at the start of a new decade was almost universally positive. Given that very few of Sabbath's signature moves remained from the last record with Ozzy, 1978's 'Never Say Die', that was some achievement. But given the quality of the material the new Sabbath had produced it was really no surprise.

OPENING NUMBER 'Neon Knights' set the band's stall out early. The rhythm section sounds almost *jaunty* here, the tune rattling along at a fair old pace as Iommi pumps out an insistently simple yet effective riff, while Dio immediately takes things up a notch with a vocal delivery that is textbook rock. People had criticised Sabbath for being bloated and jaded as the '70s drew to a close. Suddenly here they were sounding fresh, vital, and relevant once more.

Of course it was a classic tactic of the time to stick your best track upfront as the album opener. But if there were any worries that standards would soon slip here, second song 'Children Of The Sea' quickly put paid to that. Starting with a delicate Iommi acoustic noodle it doesn't take long before the guitarist gets electric and peels off a riff to die for as the song shows its full weight. Again Dio gives a flawless performance, flying high and proud above the great groove happening below. No wonder the tune is now considered a classic of the band's canon.

'Children Of The Sea' isn't the only number on 'Heaven And Hell' to have since been accorded such revered status either. The title track is seven minutes of old school heavy metal bliss, building from a slow and steady pace to an all-out wig-out, with Dio conducting the electric orchestra like he was born to it. 'Die Young' is an atmospheric beauty, making its impact by turning rock's regular dynamics on their head; verses fast and heavy, chorus soft and almost ethereal. Best of all, though, is album closer 'Lonely Is The Word', a song that combines power with soul and shows exactly why Iommi and Dio's ability to fuse rough with smooth was such a potent formula.

GIVEN THE quality of much of the material on 'Heaven And Hell' you could argue that 'Lady Evil', 'Wishing Well', and 'Walk Away' aren't quite up there, good not great. But that doesn't stop the album from being a triumph of traditional heavy metal music, made at a time when sub-genres mattered less and fans could easily unite under one banner. The 'Heaven And Hell' flag still flutters majestically today.

HOWARD JOHNSON

ORIGINAL REVIEW

"This album shows that after 12 years the Sabs haven't lost that vital punch which will send any respectable HM aficionado crawling on his knees in orgasmic ecstasy, and knocks yer average current crop of leather-clad, chain-swinging outfits into a cocked hat. Just sit back, turn it up and feel your brain implode."

– Pete Makowski, *Sounds*, 26 April 1980

'HEAVEN AND HELL' FACT: When Ronnie Dio joined Sabbath in 1979 he originally played bass as well as singing, while Geezer Butler tried to work his way through a tricky divorce. Geoff Nicholls played bass on demos for the album before Geezer eventually returned and Nicholls shifted to adding keyboard flourishes.

Photos: Getty Images/Pete Still/Redferns; Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns

STRIKTLY FOR KONNOISSEURS

MONSTER ROCK ALBUMS FOR THOSE WHO NEED TO GO DEEPER

GENTLE GIANT – 'Acquiring The Taste'

(VERTIGO)

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1971

LINE UP

GARY GREEN – GUITARS, MANDOLIN, BASS, AND JAWBONE
KERRY MINNEAR – KEYBOARDS, CELLO, VIBRAPHONE, PERCUSSION, AND VOCALS
DEREK SHULMAN – SAXOPHONE, CLAVICHORD, COWBELL, AND VOCALS
PHIL SHULMAN – CLARINET, TRUMPET, SAXOPHONE, PIANO, PERCUSSION, AND VOCALS
RAY SHULMAN – BASS, VIOLINS, GUITARS, PERCUSSION, AND VOCALS
MARTIN SMITH – DRUMS AND PERCUSSION

AS THE PASTEL-HEWED 1960s morphed into the denim and leather of the 1970s, all albums that emerged from the underground psychedelic and blues scene were simply labelled 'progressive rock'. And when singles-buying pop fans from the '60s developed into sophisticated rock fans of the '70s the major record labels quickly decided to launch esoteric-sounding subsidiaries to cater for this trend. Decca were first out of the traps with Deram, and they were swiftly followed by EMI with Harvest, and then perhaps most famously by Philips with Vertigo.

Armed with generous A&R budgets each label entered into such a frantic feeding frenzy that for a while it felt like any motley bunch of long-haired dopers in kaftans could land a deal. The great majority were no hopers, good for one album and a swift return to oblivion. Vertigo seemed to have an especially low strike rate. For every Heep or Sabbath there was a Hokus Poke or Dr Z.

GENTLE GIANT, however, trod a middle pathway. While they enjoyed little commercial success at home in the UK, overseas it was a different story, and the band was acclaimed first in continental Europe and later in the United States. Formed from the remnants of 1960s one-hit wonders Simon Dupree And The Big Sound, Gentle Giant set out their musical manifesto on the sleeve notes of 'Acquiring The Taste', their second and best album. "It is our goal to expand the frontiers of contemporary popular music at the risk of being very unpopular," they explained with admirable candour. What 'Acquiring The Taste' manages to do brilliantly is combine the heaviness of Sabbath or Heep with the musical quality and trickiness of bands like Yes and King Crimson.

THERE IS much to enjoy here if you're a devotee of the various strands of the progressive scene, including a healthy lashing of folk rock. Guitarist Gary Green is equally at ease with electric guitar and mandolin, while vocals move between the classic blues howl of Derek Shulman, and the mellifluous lilt of Kerry Minnear.

The Gentle Giant sound really comes together on opener 'Pantagruel's Nativity' where we get to hear plainsong vocals and staccato heavy rock riffing on one and the same tune. But if you're looking for more muscular moments then head for 'Wreck' and 'Plain Truth', both epic rockers that cloak themselves in delightfully unexpected interludes provided by the enormous range of instruments on show. The four minutes of 'Black Cat' is also worth investigation, where the interplay between plucked and bowed violins magically conjures up an image of a prowling alley cat.

ON 'ACQUIRING The Taste' the members of Gentle Giant show themselves to be a band whose musical scope is almost orchestral, without at any point sounding pompous or overblown. In other words, this is classic prog rock before the wheels came off and most of its exponents, including Gentle Giant, found themselves drowning under the weight of their own self-importance.

Giles Hamilton

DARE – 'Out Of The Silence'

(A&M)

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1988

LINE UP
DARREN WHARTON – VOCALS AND KEYBOARDS
VINNY BURNS – GUITAR
BRIAN COX – KEYBOARDS
MARTIN 'SHELLEY' SHELTON – BASS
JAMES ROSS – DRUMS

KEYBOARD PLAYER DARREN WHARTON played his last show as a member of Thin Lizzy in Nuremberg, Germany in September of 1983. He wasn't out of work for long, though. Phonogram Records, home to Def Leppard at the time, snapped Wharton up for a solo deal. He soon started working with guitarist Vinny Burns and all seemed set fair for a quick release of a debut solo album. But just as test pressings of a first single appeared Phonogram's new management decided on a restructuring of the label's roster. Suddenly Darren Wharton was surplus to requirements.

Undeterred, Burns and Wharton recruited two local musicians, drummer John Ross and bassist Martin 'Shelley' Shelton before playing their first gig as Dare at the famous Spread Eagle pub in Ashton-Under-Lyne, Manchester toward the end of '85.

HAVING WHARTON fronting the band from behind his keyboards limited their visual appeal, however, so Dare started looking for a keyboard player. They eventually settled on Brian Cox, who has since gone on to find fame in the UK as a TV popular scientist. The band played locally and wrote songs as they tried to secure a new deal. There was interest from Chrysalis, EMI, MCA, and RCA, and after a successful showcase-style gig in Oldham, near to Wharton's birthplace, A&M signed Dare in mid-1987.

The band were keen to work with Mike Shipley, who was fresh from engineering Def Leppard's 'Hysteria' album, but also ended up bringing Larry Klein on board to oversee production of a debut album. Recording of 'Out Of The Silence' began at Hook End Manor, once the home of Pink Floyd's David Gilmour, and ended at Joni Mitchell's Bel Air residence in California, mainly because Klein was married to Mitchell at the time.

RELEASED IN 1988, 'Out Of The Silence' showcased a British band firing a broadside at their American counterparts by serving up a delicious blend of AOR, albeit tinged with something of a Celtic feel. This additional ingredient gave Dare a unique sound for the time, driven by Burns's guitar playing and Wharton's distinctive vocals. Featuring the silky smooth 'Abandon' and the parping 'Into The Fire', as well as 'The Raindance', (surely a distant cousin of John Farnham's 'You're The Voice'), and a mournful tribute to Wharton's erstwhile Lizzy band mate Phil Lynott titled 'Kings Of Spades', 'Out Of The Silence' is surely one of the greatest British AOR albums ever made.

A&M TRIED hard to gain traction with Dare. There were promotional videos for all of 'Abandon', 'The Raindance' and 'Nothing Is Stronger Than Love', as well as tours opening for Jimmy Page, Europe, and Gary Moore. But the group never made it to the big time, despite still being a going concern today. In 2018 they released a 30-year anniversary re-recording of 'Out Of The Silence', which proved that there's still life in these old dogs yet.

Rob Evans

Photos: Getty Images/Jorgen Angel/Redferns; IconicPix/PG Brunelli

ROCK CANDY REISSUE

THE VERY LATEST HOT RE-RELEASE FROM THE LABEL

GIANT – 'Last Of The Runaways'

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1989

LINE UP
DANN HUFF – vocals, guitar
ALAN PASQUA – keyboards, backing vocals
MIKE BRIGNARDELLO – bass guitar, backing vocals
DAVID HUFF – drums, backing vocals

BACKGROUND
During the '70s and '80s there were a number of bands that were formed by session players, such as Toto, Mr. Mister and Winger. Giant came from the same stock. Drummer David Huff and his brother, vocalist and guitarist Dann, were respected and in-demand session guys who'd previously played in successful Christian hard rock band White Heart. That group had recorded and released a couple of albums before the duo split from the ranks to infiltrate the lucrative West Coast session scene.

Despite their success as players for hire, the buzz of working on their own music led Dann and David to form the heavy yet melodic Giant alongside keyboardist Alan Pasqua and bassist Mike Brignardello. The band quickly hooked up with Bud Prager, a heavyweight manager who numbered Foreigner and Mountain amongst his clients. Prager introduced Giant to respected British producer Terry Thomas, who'd been a member of '70s melodic rockers Charlie and had helped the reformed Bad Company score gold when he oversaw 1988's 'Dangerous Age' album. Thomas was enthusiastic about working with Giant, especially as a number of labels wanted to sign the band. They eventually opted to go with A&M. Recording of a debut album began in Los Angeles, but the

team eventually moved to the UK to complete the record.

WHAT DAVID HUFF SAYS
"We had such trouble coming up with a name. Being as Dann and I are brothers we could have called the band Huff, in the same way that Van Halen has two brothers. But somehow Van Halen comes across as being a cool name; Huff doesn't have the same ring to it. We had a few ideas, but they were all terrible. I'm not even going to tell everyone what they were. It's best to forget about all of them! Then one day, we were at a diner with a friend and there was a photo on the wall. Out of the blue he said, 'You know? This photo reminds me of the James Dean movie *Giant*. It has that feel about it'. And we all thought that Giant would be a great name for our band. So we took it."

TRACKS TO CHECK OUT
'Last Of The Runaways' boasts a seemingly endless supply of supremely crafted melodic rock songs, but you should definitely pay special attention to anthemic opening track 'I'm A Believer', 'Innocent Days', 'Hold Back The Night' and the US Top 20 single 'I'll See You In My Dreams'..

MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK
The Rock Candy CD is fully remastered and features a 12-page colour booklet with enhanced artwork, together with a 3,500-word interview by *Rock Candy Mag* editor-at-large Malcolm Dome.

THE WORD FROM RC BOSS DEREK OLIVER
"Issued in 1989 to widespread critical acclaim, 'Last Of The Runaways' is a benchmark melodic rock record, resonating with power and passion. The album provides a tremendous showcase for the musical talents of David and Dann Huff. Dann is arguably one of the greatest guitar players of the era, a true virtuoso. Listen to how brilliantly executed his solos are. Terry Thomas's production, meanwhile, is mind-blowingly good. There are few releases from the same period that come close for quality of songs and musicianship. Revisit 'Last Of The Runaways' and be amazed."

Buy this album and tons of other great releases at *www.rockcandyrecords.com*

ROCK CANDY PICKS

THE STUFF THAT'S GRABBED OUR ATTENTION

ARMORED SAINT 'Punching The Sky'

(METAL BLADE)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
The thrash pioneers, formed in LA in '82, are back with an eighth album of new material, produced by bassist Joey Vera. "When you're a band that began four decades ago you have to push yourself harder than ever when it comes to making a new record," says vocalist John Bush. "The last thing you want is for it to appear as though you were going through the motions.".

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
Extremely heavy! This is a much more aggressive set of songs than appeared on the band's last studio recording, 2015's 'Win Hands Down'. They're shorter and sharper and at their core are full throttle heavy metal. But that doesn't mean that the band are afraid to incorporate a range of unexpected instruments, including Native American flute and uilleann pipes. There are definite nods to Anthrax, Iron Maiden, Apollyon Sun, and Thin Lizzy, but as Bush insists, the album "sounds like a band that's living in the now."

BEST BITS
This is a really consistent set of songs without a duff track in sight. But allow me to highlight 'Bubble', a tune that works a treat with its static weirdness. The more traditional 'Missile To Gun' offers up a number of short, sharp and nasty riffs, featuring a chorus that reminds me of Iron Maiden. And let's not forget 'Never You Fret', where drummer Gonzo Sandoval steps up to the plate for a little toot of the Native American flute!

THE VERDICT
For a band that's been going for nearly four decades Armored Saint sound remarkably fresh, perhaps because they've never seemed more committed to pushing the envelope musically. Fans will drool over the sheer heaviness of 'Punching The Sky' and for me the Saint have delivered their best album since 'Delirious Nomad' in '85!
Xavier Russell

BLACK SABBATH 'Paranoid' 50th Anniversary Super Deluxe Box Set (BMG)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
The 'Paranoid' album is 50 years old, which means that the 1970s began half a century ago. This record is far closer in time to the outbreak of World War II than it is to today, so how has it remained so relevant? A lavish anniversary re-packaging goes some way to telling that story. Here is nothing less than the birth of heavy metal: the tropes begun by songs like 'War Pigs', 'Iron Man', and 'Hand Of Doom' became the pillars of the genre, endlessly reworked and endlessly influential.

WHAT GUITARIST TONY IOMMI SAYS
"We didn't want a hit single... [but] 'Paranoid' just took off. We were as shocked as anybody when that got in the charts. We thought, 'Bloody hell, there's all this stuff here we're trying to do musically, and then something as simple as "Paranoid" gets in the charts and everybody remembers it!'"

ANY EXTRAS?
Loads. Available as either a five-LP or four-CD box set, the package includes the original album plus a new 'Quad' mix, and live recordings of two 1970 concerts, one from Brussels and the other from Casino de Montreux a year or so before the famous fire immortalised in 'Smoke On The Water'.

HIGHLIGHTS
The Big Three of the title track, 'War Pigs', and 'Iron Man' are so familiar as to be almost redundant. So this box offers a good chance to dig back down into songs like 'Planet Caravan' and 'Electric Funeral', which have more to reveal. The live shows are rough and ready in terms of the recording, but what a band Sabbath were. The spotlight has long shone on Ozzy and Tony, but it's great to listen to the supple, almost jazzy inflections of bassist Geezer Butler and drummer Bill Ward here, one of the great rhythm sections. This is a record that will still be played in another 50 years...
Jon Hotten

Photo: Travis Shinn

ROCK CANDY PICKS

THE STUFF THAT'S GRABBED OUR ATTENTION

BLUE ÖYSTER CULT 'The Symbol Remains'

(FRONTIERS)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
BÖC haven't released a studio album since 2001's poorly received 'The Curse Of The Hidden Mirror', so 'The Symbol Remains' will rightly excite fans craving new material. Boasting a bold and dramatic painted cover, this is the US veterans' 15th studio album in a recording career dating back to 1972.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
The band have pulled off a welcome and unexpected trick here. The music is true to their illustrious past, but is modern and forward looking at the same time. First track 'That Was Me' has typically tongue-in-cheek yet menacing lyrics, interesting time changes, and a fine guitar solo from Buck Dharma. Meanwhile the longest number on the album, 'The Alchemist', nods to the dark vibe of 'Nosferatu' from the classic 1977 'Spectres' album.

BEST BITS
Hard to say, because this is an album of highlights! Buck Dharma's excellent playing features prominently throughout, but overall these 14 tracks sound like fully formed *songs* for the first time in quite a while. On a number like 'Nightmare Epiphany' the lyrics are densely packed and the time changes are complicated, but there's always a strong melody and structure that rewards repeated listening. Easily BÖC's most consistent album in decades, there are a number of songs here that are worthy of your attention. 'Edge Of The World' combines riffs, melody, and harmony perfectly, while the softer 'Secret Road' has a beautiful melancholic feel. The album's classic-in-the-making, though, is 'Tainted Blood', a bombastically epic vampire love song that rocks from start to finish, while also featuring the most glorious singalong chorus on the album.

THE VERDICT
This is a five-star release of skilfully crafted music played by rock veterans with a youthful energy that belies their years. For me it's a resounding return to form.
Ross Sampson

JOE BONAMASSA 'Royal Tea'

(PROVOGUE/J&R ADVENTURES)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
In an effort to capture the spirit of his English guitar heroes like Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, and John Mayall, Joe Bonamassa made the decision to write and record this album in London. Collaborating with one-time Whitesnake guitarist Bernie Marsden, Cream's lyricist Pete Brown, and pianist and blues aficionado Jools Holland, Joe has gone all out to create an authentic British blues-rock album.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
Bonamassa has unashamedly immersed himself in the style of the guitar masters who made Brit blues rock the envy of the world in the late '60s. 'Royal Tea' was mostly recorded at the famous Abbey Road studio and while clearly drawing on Cream and Fleetwood Mac for inspiration, Bonamassa also tips a wink in the direction of Rory Gallagher in his '70s pomp, together with a bit of early Whitesnake. Thankfully, though, this release isn't just an aping of a bygone age. 'Royal Tea' feels both modern and vibrant, offering Bonamassa a way of showing off his roots without trampling them into the dirt.

BEST BITS
This is a real 'start to finish' album, but 'High Class Girl' has serious bite, as does the driving 'Lookout Man'. 'A Conversation With Alice' features some lovely guitar tones, while 'I Didn't Think She Would Do It' wouldn't sound out of place on Whitesnake's 'Ready An' Willing' album. Opening track 'When One Door Opens' is the real show-stealer, though, balancing lovely guitar with gorgeous orchestration. The late Peter Green would surely approve.

HIGHLIGHTS
Bonamassa is so prolific that you sometimes feel you don't have time to learn to love his releases. This time around it feels different. His guitar playing and singing has never sounded better and 'Royal Tea' comes across as the kind of tasteful release you'll return to time and again. A triumph for all involved.
Malcolm Dome

FISH 'Weltschmerz'

(CHOCOLATE FROG)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Former Marillion frontman Fish has spent five years planning the curtain call on his life as a musician. Medical issues, a period of writer's block and, finally, COVID-19, all combined to delay the release of this, his 11th and final solo album. No wonder its title is the German word for 'World Pain'.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
Given that its songs are largely inspired by man's inhumanity to man, while also shining a spotlight on the body's frailty, you'd expect 'Weltschmerz' to be a depressing album. Thankfully that's not the case. It *is* wordy, but when the narratives are this thoughtful and entertaining, and the melodies so strong, then frankly, who cares? 'Weltschmerz' offers the Scotsman's finest set of lyrics to date and the musicians behind him deliver world-class performances. Hats off to producer Calum Malcolm for a fabulous mix that will help you hear something brand new with each repeated listen.

BEST BITS
'Weltschmerz' is a winner from start to finish. However, its numerous standouts include the 16-minute 'Rose Of Damascus', which Fish describes as sounding "like [movie director] David Lean doing prog", a politically themed title track which sees the singer seethe: "*I came to in a country I once considered a home/That has been lost to the scoundrels and the rogues and a circus of clowns*," and best of all, 'Garden Of Remembrance', a ballad of solid gold that details a couple struggling to cope when the male is struck by Alzheimer's. This tearjerker was inspired by Fish's mother.

THE VERDICT
On many occasions Fish has said that in an ideal world he wanted to end his solo career with a moment of true career-defining greatness, just as he did with his Marillion swansong, 1987's 'Clutching At Straws'. 'Weltschmerz' is that album!
Dave Ling

ACE FREHLEY 'Origins Vol. 2'

(EONE/SPV)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
This is the much-anticipated sequel to former Kiss guitarist Frehley's first volume of cover songs, 'Origins, Vol. 1', which was released back in 2016. Here Frehley pays homage to some of his other musical influences, enlisting fellow guitarists Bruce Kulick and John 5, Cheap Trick vocalist Robin Zander, and a returning Lita Ford (who sang 'Wild Thing' on 'Origins, Vol. 1') to join him for another rocket ride.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
Ace plays more of his favourite songs in his own unique style. Reaching back to the '60s and early '70s, the guitarist puts a flourish on material from Led Zeppelin, Mountain, Jimi Hendrix, Deep Purple, The Beatles, and Cream – without losing the organic feel of the originals. Lita Ford adds zest to the Rolling Stones' 'Jumpin' Jack Flash', while the most surprising choice is The Kinks' 'Lola'. I'm still in two minds as to whether it works or not, but at least it's delivered with tongue firmly in cheek. However, Robin Zander's vocal on Humble Pie's '30 Days In The Hole' is disappointing. He would have been a better fit replacing Ace singing Cream's 'Politician'.

BEST BITS
While Zep's 'Good Times Bad Times' would have sat nicely on Ace's 1978 solo album, Deep Purple's 'Space Truckin'' was just *made* for Frehley. You might think it's a song he should've recorded *years* ago. And actually he did! It appears Ace had it lying around in bits, but has now pieced it together highlighting some fantastic Jon Lord-style organ from his old mate Rob Sabino. The bonus track, Kiss's 'She', recorded by Ace with his current solo band, is also worth a listen.

THE VERDICT
It's not as consistent as 'Origins, Vol.1', but this album does prove that there's more fire in Ace's belly than those of his former Kiss bandmates Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley. At least Ace is recording new material, whatever their origins...
Dave Reynolds

ROCK CANDY PICKS

THE STUFF THAT'S GRABBED OUR ATTENTION

LIONHEART 'The Reality Of Miracles'

(METALVILLE RECORDS)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Formed by one time Iron Maiden guitarist Dennis Stratton, Lionheart has featured a variety of members drawn from the NWOBHM era. They've now settled on a line-up of Stratton, second guitarist Steve Mann (formerly of Liar and MSG), bassist Rocky Newton (MSG), drummer Clive Edwards (Wild Horses), and former Shy vocalist Lee Small. It sounds like an impressive line-up, but what's most pleasing about 'The Reality Of Miracles' is that the material these guys have recorded is of the highest quality, from seasoned professionals. Despite their lack of commercial success Lionheart's music has always been exemplary, commencing with their 1984 debut album, 'Hot Tonight', right through to this latest welcome statement of intent.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
When heritage bands get together to record new music the results can often prove disappointing. But 'The Reality Of Miracles' is anything but disheartening. All the players have made great contributions, but special mention must be made of Mann's guitar work and Small's vocals.

BEST BITS
There are plenty of great tracks here, including 'Thine Is The Kingdom', 'The Reality Of Miracles', 'Widows', and 'Kingdom Of The East'. It's rare to find an album of such consistency, energy, and excitement. Let's hope that, post-pandemic, we get to hear these songs live as soon as possible.

THE VERDICT
The band sound like a hungry pack of lions devouring their prey, while still staying true to their melodic rock roots, all great melodies and instantly memorable hooks. Nothing irritates me more than established artists trying to sidestep their roots and latch onto contemporary styles. That's definitely not something you could ever accuse Lionheart of doing, and more power to them for that.
Derek Oliver

METALLICA 'S&M2'

(BLACKENED)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Twenty years after their first 'S&M' project, Metallica did something they rarely do – revisit a concept. Once again hooking up with the San Francisco Symphony orchestra, two shows were performed at the Chase Center in SF on 6 and 8 September 2019. 12 months after those performances, and following a worldwide cinema release, the film and audio are now remixed, remastered and re-edited for home use.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
Unashamedly pompous. If you add Metallica's natural rock'n'roll *sturm und drang* to classical bombast, how else could it possibly sound? You can't help but feel an adrenaline rush when the assembled musicians get stuck into thrashier numbers like 'Moth Into Flame' and 'Master Of Puppets'. But the harmonising of the two styles feels more natural when the brakes are applied and the likes of 'One' and 'Nothing Else Matters' are made *better*, rather than just different.

BEST BITS
The best bit is the fact that it's on film. An *event* such as this benefits massively from the spectacle, so if you head for the visual version it's bound to be better than the music alone. A lot of time and effort clearly went into setting the orchestra up around the band performing in the centre of the stage and there's so much going on that it's impossible to get bored, as is often the case with regular rock performances coming through your TV.

THE VERDICT
There is a bit too much self-congratulatory stuff about how great and groundbreaking everybody on the stage is for my liking. Plus I can't help but think that despite visiting some genuine classical music and the inclusion of post '99 songs, this is nevertheless somehow re-treading old ground. Great fun for the people involved in making the music, for sure. But for me 'S&M 2' isn't essential within the Metallica canon.
Howard Johnson

Photos: Henrik Hildebrandt; Alan Ballard

MOTÖRHEAD 'Ace Of Spades'

(BMG)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Back in 1980 Motörhead released their fourth studio album, and 'Ace Of Spades' proved to be a game changer, thrusting bassist and vocalist Lemmy, guitarist 'Fast' Eddie Clarke, and drummer 'Philthy Animal' Taylor high into the UK charts. The album saw Motörhead escape the confines of rock's narrow world and take steps toward becoming a cultural phenomenon. Forty years later there's a box set to commemorate this.

WHAT LEMMY SAID
"We only thought of ourselves as a good time rock'n'roll band, really. We weren't trying to get a message across, apart from have a good time, you know? Get pissed, get stoned, and f*ck a chick. That'll do."

ANY EXTRAS?
The deluxe box set has loads. You get two double-live albums of previously unheard concerts from the 'Ace Up Your Sleeve' tour; a 10-inch EP of previously unreleased instrumental tracks from 1980; a double album of B-sides, outtakes and rarities; a DVD compilation of rare TV appearances from '80 and '81; another live concert from 1981; and a 5.1 audio mix of the original album. There's also a 40-page book telling the story behind 'Ace Of Spades', the 'Ace Up Your Sleeve' tour programme, a Motörhead *Rock Commando* comic, and a set of five poker dice that can be played on the game board inside the box set lid. Plus there's a 7-inch reproduction of the Dutch 'Ace Of Spades' single with a previously unreleased instrumental version of the song on the B-side. If all that's too much for you, there are also double-CD and triple-LP formats.

HIGHLIGHTS
Every track on the original 'Ace Of Spades' is priceless and it remains one of the most important albums in the history of hard rock and metal. The two 'new' live albums, recorded in Belfast and Orleans, both crackle with unrelenting energy, bringing back fond memories of Motörhead in their prime.
Malcolm Dome

RAVEN 'Metal City'

(SPV)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
It's hard to believe that Raven's debut album, 1981's 'Rock Until You Drop', is almost 40 years old. Since its release the band have suffered more than their fair share of misfortune, but given their tenacity – this is studio album number 14 – if any group deserves to be portrayed as comic book superheroes as they are on this sleeve, then it's bassist and vocalist John Gallagher, guitarist brother Mark, and newish drummer Mike Heller.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
Since hooking up with label SPV in 2009 Raven have issued consistently fine albums, but 'Metal City' raises the bar once more. All the Raven trademarks are here – faster than the speed of light riffing, John Gallagher's hyperactive vocals, and pugilistic drumming from Heller. But the songs have been well crafted while at the same time encapsulating Raven's power and passion. Ten songs are despatched in 39 minutes, with only two breaking the four-minute mark. So while the lengthy 'When Worlds Collide' showcases a more thoughtful facet of the band, the bulk are heads-down and no-nonsense.

BEST BITS
John Gallagher's voice has lost none of its edge, and the interplay between his bass and Mark Gallagher's guitar seems more pronounced than ever. Using the bass as a lead instrument certainly adds another dimension. Songwise, 'Battlescarred' comes across as an anthemic neck-breaker, before taking a completely unpredicted and exciting left-turn midway through. The band's tribute to Motörhead, 'Motorheadin'', is a nice touch, while opener 'The Power' does exactly what it says on the tin – only faster!

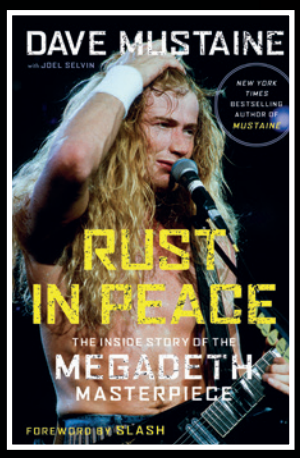
HIGHLIGHTS
Almost every Raven album has been touted as their best since that 1981 debut. With 'Metal City' the band have produced a set of songs that are as exciting and relevant as any of those featured on their first three seminal Neat Records releases.
John Tucker

ROCK CANDY PICKS

THE STUFF THAT'S GRABBED OUR ATTENTION

RUST IN PEACE – THE INSIDE STORY OF THE MEGADETH MASTERPIECE Dave Mustaine with Joel Selvin

(HACHETTE BOOKS)


DAVE MUSTAINE
with JOEL SELVIN
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF MUSTAINE
RUST IN PEACE
THE INSIDE STORY OF THE MEGADETH MASTERPIECE
FOREWORD BY SLASH

WHAT'S THE STORY?

In the late '80s Megadeth's main men – guitarist and vocalist Dave Mustaine and bassist David Ellefson – were struggling. They'd put out three albums, but had been left choking on Metallica's dust. They had no money and seemed way more interested in heroin and cocaine than thrash metal. Both appeared determined to p*ss their sorry little lives away. Somehow, though, they got sober, recorded 'Rust In Peace' and triumphed over adversity. This is the inside story of how it happened, delivered in direct speech by all of the important protagonists. Why it's credited to Mustaine alone seems downright weird.

WHAT DAVE MUSTAINE SAYS

"It was not simply the recording of an album; it was the triumph over a lifetime of adversity, a coming together of powers greater than myself, and the culmination of earthly and cosmic forces."

BEST BITS

The numbing brutality of the early drug use makes for compelling reading, but the detailed explanation of the actual recording process gives a fascinating insight into what happens behind the scenes when making art. Few outside of the bubble get to see that.

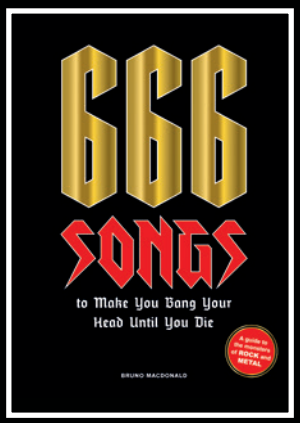
DOES IT HIT THE SPOT?

This is a searingly honest account of what it really means to be in a band. It paints an unflattering picture, both of when you're a junkie who doesn't care, and when the money you make becomes more important than anything else. What is heartening at the end, though, is that you feel Mustaine and Ellefson have refound their love of making music. If you want to read about rock as some sort of a fairy-tale happy clappy club, then avoid this book like the plague. If you want the unvarnished truth, this is unputdownable.

Howard Johnson

666 SONGS TO MAKE YOU BANG YOUR HEAD UNTIL YOU DIE Bruno MacDonald

(LAURENCE KING PUBLISHING)



WHAT'S THE STORY?

Author MacDonald delivers a seriously long list of what he believes to be loud music's finest moments. Wisely arranged in chronological order, these songs are each presented with their basic writing credits, their producer and the album from which they hail. There's also a pleasingly wide range of genres here, from rock to black metal and industrial.

WHAT THE AUTHOR SAYS

"This is a personal selection and so is based on my tastes. These songs give a good sense of metal's evolution, but 666 different ones would tell the same story in an equally valid way."

BEST BITS

Inevitably this book feels at its finest when doing one of two things: either reminding you of an amazing rock song you once loved, but haven't heard in a while, or saying things you agree with. As much as there's the odd page where the author seems to have simply rolled dice to select tracks from albums (such as Iron Maiden's 'Sea Of Madness', Nine Inch Nails's 'Terrible Lie', or Kreator's 'Death Is Your Saviour'), overall his "personal selection" isn't exactly contrary or left field.

DOES IT HIT THE SPOT?

The problem with a list of this size is that it's stupidly big. When you have literally hundreds of choices in a list of metal's finest songs, each individual nomination feels less important. Nevertheless, MacDonald has an upbeat style and neatly avoids self-indulgence by quoting the bands themselves, or other rock stars, talking about each song. The book also manages to serve double-duty as an educational overview of rock history, which ultimately makes this a fun coffee table affair.

Jason Arnopp

Photo: Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns

TYLER BRYANT & THE SHAKEDOWN
'Pressure'
(SNAKEFARM RECORDS)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Seems like there's no stopping Tyler Bryant right now, even during these times of COVID-19 where live shows have been strictly *verboten*. Alongside his compatriots in The Shakedown – drummer Caleb Crosby and guitarist Graham 'Son Of Aerosmith's Brad' Whitford – Bryant has forged a fourth album, the follow-up to last year's impressive 'Truth Or Lies', featuring 13 tracks and recorded, perhaps unsurprisingly, in Nashville. Bryant has taken the blues-rock template he started out with one step further here, offering up new insights into the direction of his musical travels.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
Bryant's blues foundations are still there for certain, but there's a suggestion that harder rock is starting to take more of a hold. The overall impression is that Bryant's on a mission to deliver fiery riffs and solos that sideline the competition. Imagine Seasick Steve turning up the volume knob and letting rip with the kind of youthful attack of Rival Sons. There's real power here, and it's genuinely awesome to hear such a rush of pure energy and attitude.

BEST BITS
There's much to like on this album thanks to a very cool, stripped-down production and some excellent song arrangements. The track with the most commercial appeal is the laid-back first single 'Crazy Days'. But don't worry. That number is surrounded by a batch of foot-stomping, heavy, blues-rock songs such as 'Hitchhiker' and 'Coastin''. But if you feel the need to peel back Bryant's heritage, then take a listen to 'Misery', a song that was surely crafted from the catalogues of traditional American folk songwriters Woody Guthrie and Bob Dylan. Blackberry Smoke fans will be particularly interested to know that vocalist Charlie Starr appears on the track 'Holdin' My Breath'.

THE VERDICT
There's a catch-all label for Bryant's music – and that's 'Damaged Blues'. This music has taken something of a commercial back seat for a number of years, but in the hands of such a talented individual as Tyler Bryant the movement is, in my opinion, at the point of exploding big time. My advice is to get on the bus while you still can, secure a comfortable seat and eat a peach.
Derek Oliver

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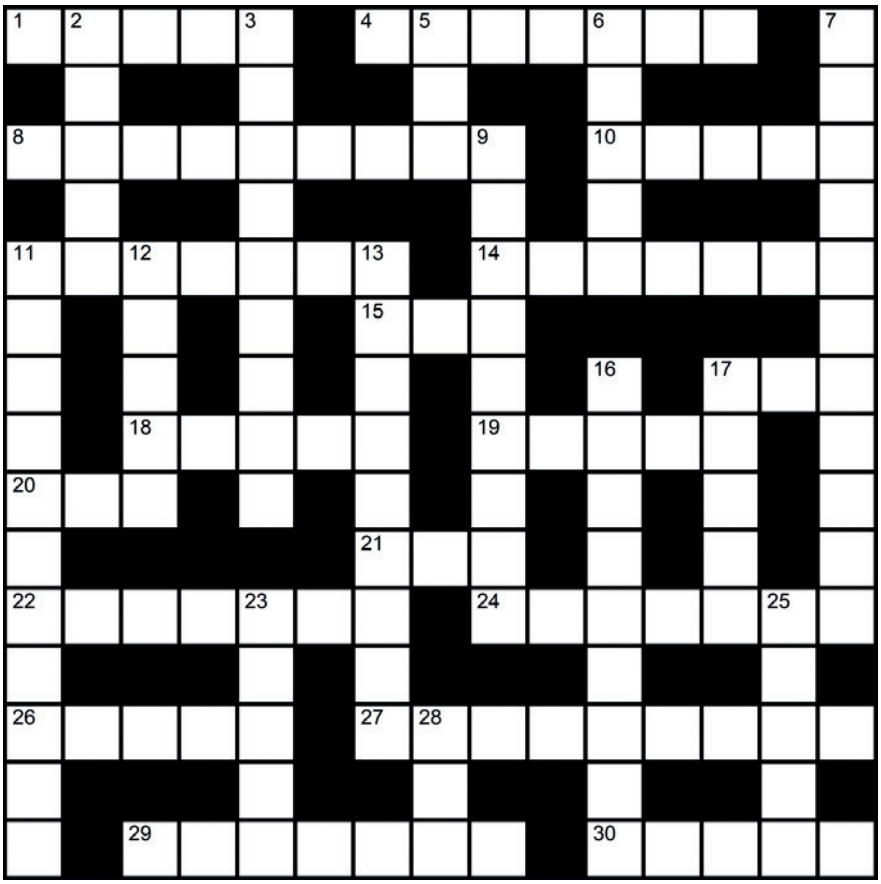
CROSSWORD

No guts, no glory! Can you beat the *Rock Candy Mag* crossword into a cocked hat?



The *Rock Candy Mag* crossword is compiled by former *Kerrang!* writer **Jason Arnopp**, whose book *From The Front Lines Of Rock* gathers the highlights from his career in journalism. Featuring vintage interviews with the likes of Iron Maiden, Metallica, Kiss, Guns N' Roses, Bon Jovi and Queensrÿche, it's out on Kindle via Amazon sites worldwide or can be bought direct from Arnopp in several formats, via **payhip.com/Arnopp.**

17 DOWN: PAT BENATAR

ACROSS

1 ----- Friedman originally teamed up with Jason Becker in Cacophony before joining Megadeth. (5)
4 Blingy track from Montrose's 1976 album 'Jump On It'. (4,3)
8 Former Kiss and Meat Loaf guitarist who sadly left us in May. (3,6)
10 First word in the name of the classic British rock band fronted by Bernie Shaw. (5)
11 Eric Martin unconvincingly claimed to be '--- ---- Tall' back in 1983. (3,4)
14 Love/Hate experienced a 'Blackout In The --- ----' in 1990. (3,4)
15 'Don't Believe ---' insisted Scorpions on 1990's 'Crazy World' album. (3)
17 1988 saw Britny Fox having '--- In Texas'. (3)
18 French/American guitarist Jack -----, who started his solo career with 1984's 'Out Of The Darkness'. (5)
19 ----- Yamamoto, guitarist with Bow Wow/Vow Wow. (5)
20 '--- Your Mother Down' suggested Queen, while also recommending locking daddy out of doors. (3)
21 Former Scorpions guitarist Ulrich Roth formed Electric --- in 1978. (3)
22 This Canadian power trio unleashed debut album 'Heavy Metal Maniac' in 1983. (7)
24 A seriously meaty track on Judas Priest's 1980 album 'British Steel'. (7)
26 '--- -- Rock', the opening track on Bon Jovi's 'Slippery When Wet' release from 1986. (3,2)
27 Jacksonville rockers fronted by Rickey Medlocke. (9)
29 Rush opened up some 'Power -------' in 1985. (7)
30 Longtime Helix four-stringer ----- Gray. (5)

DOWN

2 Dokken found themselves '----- Again' on 1984's 'Tooth And Nail' album. (5)
3 'Surprise! ----- ----!', exclaimed Faith No More – somewhat improbably – in 1989. (5,4)
5 The 'company' that was founded by Metallica: 'Damage ---'. (3)
6 Alternative rockers Hüsker Dü were fronted by Bob -----. (5)
7 Black Sabbath's 1992 album with Ronnie James Dio on vocals. (11)
9 Shiny-domed Slayer axeman. (5,4)
11 This track on Malice's 1985 debut 'In The Beginning' suggested that they thought it was all written in the cards. (5,6)
12 ----- Records, the loud German label that put out records by Gamma Ray, Kreator, and Rage. (5)
13 The fifth Wishbone Ash studio album, '------ The ---', released in 1974. (6,3)
16 'No Rest --- The ------', insisted Mr Osbourne back in 1988. (3,6)
17 Pat Benatar got herself 'All ----- Up' on the 'Wide Awake In Dreamland' album back in 1988. (5)
23 British rock band featuring ex-Angel Witch man Kev Riddles that dished out 'Rough Justice'. (5)
25 ----- Records, the British heavy metal label featuring Grim Reaper, Savage, and Blood Money. (5)
28 'I Am The ---' said Anthrax in their comic book phase of 1987. (3)

For answers go to our website www.rockcandymag.com

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'WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD

JOHN NORUM - 'TAKING CONTROL'

JOHN NORUM - 'FACE THE TRUTH'

JOHN NORUM
'ANOTHER DESTINATION'

SABU - 'S/T'

SABU - 'HEARTBREAK'

MOLLY HATCHET - 'S/T'

ZON - 'ASTRAL PROJECTOR'

ORPHAN - 'S/T'

KIDD GLOVE - 'S/T'

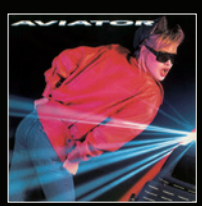
KEEL - 'THE FINAL FRONTIER'

KEEL - 'S/T'

FASTWAY -'TRICK OR TREAT'

FOGHAT - 'FOOL FOR THE CITY'

FOGHAT - 'LIVE'



AVIATOR - 'S/T'

ANGEL - 'WHITE HOT'

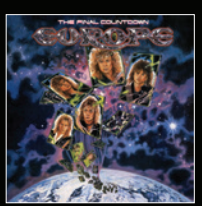
ANGEL - 'SINFUL'

ANGEL - 'LIVE WITHOUT A NET'

FASTWAY - 'ALL FIRED UP'

SHY - 'BRAVE THE STORM'

SHY - 'EXCESS ALL AREAS'



EUROPE
'THE FINAL COUNTDOWN'

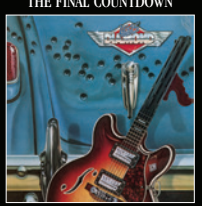
OZZ - 'NO PRISONERS'

GODDO - 'S/T'

Y&T - 'EARTHSHAKER'

Y&T - 'BLACK TIGER'

Y&T - 'MEAN STREAK'


LEGS DIAMOND - 'S/T'

LEGS DIAMOND
'A DIAMOND IS A HARD ROCK'

LEGS DIAMOND - 'FIRE POWER'

COMING SOON

LEGS DIAMOND - 'OUT ON BAIL'

LEGS DIAMOND
'LAND OF THE GUN'

LEGS DIAMOND - 'TOWN BAD GIRL'

WAYSTED - 'VICES'

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